

Horatio Will Be Late

A comedy in two acts

By
Burton Bumgarner

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Miss Duncan, the Stratford High School drama teacher, has always wanted to direct "Hamlet," but from the very start her production is doomed. The lead actor is a prima dona who exasperates his peers. The other actors are either jealous that they weren't cast in different roles, or clueless. On opening night the costumes still haven't arrived, so the stage crew tries to improvise with costumes from previous shows, such as "Grease," and "South Pacific." The makeup is lost in a car fire, and the actor who is to play Horatio calls from the hospital: he is about to have an emergency appendectomy.

A member of the cast has a cousin who is a professional actor, and who recently performed in "Hamlet." When he arrives, Miss Duncan learns, much to her horror, that the actor played the role of Hamlet, not Horatio. When cue cards are suggested, they discover their actor is dyslexic and can't read them.

Chaos reigns as actors upstage each other, mis-cue each other, and finally end up in a big fight. Add a nosy principal, a visitor from an arts conservatory, and the pressure of trying to fulfill the terms of a state grant, and we have the worst, and the funniest, production ever of Shakespeare's great tragedy.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 6 w)

MISS DUNCAN: High school drama teacher.
MRS. QUINCE: High school principal, not a theater person.
SARAH: A student, will play Ophelia.
BEN: A student, will play Polonius.
WILL: A student, clueless, will play Rosencrantz.
JOSH: A student, will play the Ghost.
DREW: A student, a prima dona, will play Hamlet.
ASHLEY: A student, will play Guildenstern.
KATHY: A student, will play Gertrude.
ZACK: A professional actor, tries to play Horatio.
KELLY: A student, handles makeup and costumes.
DR. LUCIUS BARRYMORE: A visitor from the Arts Conservatory;
has no lines.

SYNOPSIS

Act I: Late afternoon, the day of the performance.
Act II: The performance that evening.

SETTING

The setting for Act I is the green room, backstage, of the Stratford High School Theater. Upstage are coat racks with costumes, and tables with makeup, wigs, props, furniture, etc. Beat-up sofas and chairs are downstage. For Act II the setting is the high school stage and SR wing space. A seat in the audience is left empty. It will be used in the second act.

PROPS and SPECIAL COSTUMES

Cell phone
Hawaiian shirts
Leis
Elizabethan costume for Zack
Slip of paper
Crutches
Note pad and pen
Surfboard with cue cards taped on it
Reading glasses
Frankenstein mask
Script
Cup from fast food restaurant
Handkerchief
Muumuus
Grass skirt
Poodle skirt
Baseball jersey
Victorian dress
Cold cream
Clown makeup

ACT I

(AT RISE: Late afternoon. MISS DUNCAN, the director, is talking on her cell phone. She paces downstage. SARAH, BEN, KELLY and WILL ENTER. Sarah is wearing Hawaiian clothes, a muumuu, leis, etc. They wait for Miss Duncan to finish her conversation.)

DUNCAN: (On phone.) Why are my costumes in New Jersey? There were supposed to be here two weeks ago! I sent you a list of my cast and I sent you a check! My play is about to open and I don't have any costumes! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? ... I don't want my check back! I want the costumes I rented! ... (With desperation.) I'M NOT ANGRY! I'M DESPERATE! ... Hello? (To STUDENTS.) He hung up. What else can go wrong with this production?

BEN: Somebody might come see it.

DUNCAN: (To BEN.) That's not funny! (To SARAH.) Why are you dressed like that?

SARAH: Kelly did it.

DUNCAN: (To KELLY.) Why is Sarah dressed like that?

KELLY: You told me to look for costumes in case we didn't get the ones you rented.

DUNCAN: We're doing "Hamlet," not "Gilligan's Island."

KELLY: We don't have a very good costume department.

BEN: (Rolls HIS eyes.) All we've done lately are zany comedies set in New York apartments.

WILL: I like those zany comedies! Especially that last one by ... (Thinks.) Neil Diamond.

SARAH: Neil Diamond?

WILL: Yeah. You know. "Barefoot in the Dark."


SARAH: That's "Barefoot in the PARK"!

WILL: That's what I said. So why are we doing this "Hamlet" thing?

DUNCAN: I thought our school needed a challenge. We haven't produced a Shakespeare play in fifteen years. And I always wanted to direct "Hamlet." Shakespeare's greatest tragedy!

WILL: I'm having trouble following the story. Is it supposed to be funny?

DUNCAN: Funny? It's arguably the greatest drama in the English language!

WILL:  you're saying ... it's not supposed to be funny?

BEN: Have you even read it?

WILL: Kind of. I can't quite tell what it's about.

SARAH: Look, Will. Hamlet's father is murdered by Claudius. His father's ghost appears to Hamlet and tells him to avenge his death. Meantime, Claudius has married Hamlet's mother and he's the king of Denmark.

WILL: That's not very funny.

BEN: Instead of killing Claudius, Hamlet kills Polonius, and then goes to England with his friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

WILL: *(With pride.)* I'm one of those guys!

BEN: Right. You're Rosencrantz. You and your friend are supposed to kill Hamlet.

WILL: Why?

BEN: Because Claudius told you to. But Hamlet kills you two instead.

WILL: I knew I got killed, but I thought it was supposed to be funny.

SARAH: Hamlet returns to Denmark and learns that Ophelia, the daughter of Polonius, has killed herself, and her brother, Laertes, wants to avenge his father's murder by killing Hamlet.

BEN: Claudius arranges a duel. He dips the tip of a sword in poison which strikes both Hamlet and Laertes.

SARAH: Then Gertrude mistakenly drinks from a cup of poison, and right before he dies, Hamlet stabs Claudius with a dagger.

KELLY: And everyone lives happily ever after ... except they're dead.

WILL: Whoa! Is this thing rated R? My mother won't like it if has bad words and lie-citinus behavior.

DUNCAN: Are you trying to say la-CIV-ious behavior?

WILL: I don't know. Am I?

SARAH: Look, Rosenbush. Just go to England and die. That's all you have to worry about.

(JOSH ENTERS dressed in black.)

JOSH: *(To KELLY.)* How's this?

DUNCAN: It's terrible! What are you trying to do?

JOSH: Kelly told me to dress like a ghost. Where's Jan?

DUNCAN: Jan has the night off. She was going to study for a chemistry test. Kelly is supposed to do makeup, *(To KELLY.)* right?

KELLY: I can't do anyone's makeup.

DUNCAN: Why not? I thought you liked doing makeup.

KELLY: I love doing makeup. But Jan took the makeup kits home.

DUNCAN: OH NO!

JOSH: I'm not going to look like much of a ghost without makeup. And my parents are bringing all of our relatives tonight.

DUNCAN: Don't we have makeup here?

KELLY: We do. But it's so old it's like cement. Did you know base can grow mold?

OTHERS: Ooo! Gross!

JOSH: She ain't putting that stuff on my face!

DUNCAN: Does anyone know Jan's phone number?

KELLY: I do. But she lives across town and she doesn't have a car. Someone will have to go get the kits.

DUNCAN: *(To KELLY.)* Can you go get them?

KELLY: No ma'am, I cannot.

DUNCAN: You can't?

KELLY: No, ma'am.

DUNCAN: Why not?

KELLY: I don't have a driver's license.

DUNCAN: Why don't you have a driver's license?

KELLY: I'm only fourteen!

DUNCAN: Oh. Who on the crew has a license and a car?

JOSH: Jack does. But I don't think his car will make it across town.

DUNCAN: Why not?

JOSH: Have you ever seen his car? It kind of resembles an old building that fell down. And it makes so much smoke it's on the Environmental Protection Agency's hit list.

DUNCAN: *(To KELLY.)* Go ask Jack to please drive to Jan's house and get the makeup kits.

(KELLY EXITS.)

DUNCAN: (Continued.) Josh has to look like a ghost. (Looking at HER watch.) I hope Kelly can get him made up in time.

BEN: If not, the Ghost will look like Johnnie Cash.

WILL: Like who?

JOSH: Do you realize that almost everyone in this play ends up dead? But I'm already dead before it even starts. I think it's cool.

DUNCAN: You're going to do great, Josh. Go tell Kelly to scrape the mold off of the base and try and soften up the rest of it in the microwave.

(JOSH EXITS.)



SARAH: It's going to be awful!

DUNCAN: Sarah! We need to have positive attitudes. We'll have people in the audience from across the state. A high school production of "Hamlet" is a major achievement.

BEN: Our "Hamlet" is going to be a major mess.

DUNCAN: It can't be a mess! We received a grant from the state arts council for this production. We have the money for costumes. We have the money for makeup. Why did I assume everything would be all right?

WILL: I don't know. There must be something wrong with you.

SARAH: We can do "Hamlet" without costumes and makeup, Miss Duncan. It won't be very good ... but it probably wasn't going to be very good anyway.

DUNCAN: It HAS to be good!

BEN: What if we canceled it?

DUNCAN: We would forfeit the grant money, we wouldn't have a spring production, and I'd look really stupid. Look, this is going to work. Some how, some way. It is going to work!

WILL: Maybe if "Hamlet" was set in a New York apartment and the characters were all kind of ... zany.

DUNCAN: (To WILL.) Will, do you know all your lines?

WILL: I think so. I don't know what they mean.

SARAH: Do you remember who you are?

WILL: Yeah. I'm ... uh ... Rosenbush.

DUNCAN: That's Rosencrantz! You're Rosencrantz! Ashley is Guildenstern!

WILL: If me and Ashley are Hamlet's friends, why does he kill us?

BEN: (*Frustrated.*) Because you're supposed to kill him!

WILL: I'm having trouble with "Hamlet."

BEN: So am I. (*To DUNCAN.*) You just HAD to cast you know who in the lead.

DUNCAN: Ben, we've been over this. Drew had a very good audition.

BEN: He cheated!

SARAH: How can you cheat at an audition?

BEN: He memorized the entire script before he even showed up! He's been working on it for a year! Ever since you first mentioned you'd like to do "Hamlet" someday.

DUNCAN: Forget about Drew!

BEN: I wish I could.

(*KELLY ENTERS.*)

KELLY: I told Jack to get the makeup kits from Jan. He said he'd try, but sometimes stuff falls off of his car when he's driving it.

DUNCAN: Thank you, Kelly. Did you try the community theater for costumes?

KELLY: They rented their Elizabethan costumes to a company in New Jersey. I think they're doing "Richard III."

DUNCAN: (*To BEN.*) What about the Actor's Theater?

BEN: They rented their costumes to Theater New Jersey. "Henry IV."

DUNCAN: What about New Arts Theater?

SARAH: They rented their costumes to a community theater in New Jersey. "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

DUNCAN: Theater Repertory?

BEN: They rented their costumes to a high school in New Jersey. "Romeo and Juliet."

DUNCAN: If we want costumes, it looks like we need to move to New Jersey!

KELLY: I can try the middle school. They did something old about five years ago.

BEN: It was "Alice in Wonderland." Sarah and I were in it.

DUNCAN: What about the costumes?

SARAH: The story is set in the nineteenth century. The costumes weren't exactly Elizabethan.

BEN: We were in the sixth grade. I think we're all a little bigger now.

WILL: What about if the prince's father was pretending to be dead, only he was really hiding out at a suite in the Plaza Hotel?

SARAH: *(To WILL.)* It's "Hamlet," Will! It's not supposed to be funny!

WILL: I bet Neil Diamond could make it funny.

SARAH: It's Neil Simon!

WILL: What's Neil Simon?

DUNCAN: *(To KELLY.)* What do we have in the basement?

KELLY: We found costumes from "Grease," "My Fair Lady," and "South Pacific."

BEN: We could set "Hamlet" at a fifties drive-in ...

SARAH: Or Victorian England ...

KELLY: Or on a tropical island.

DUNCAN: That's the worst idea I've ever heard! I hate giving Shakespeare contemporary settings! He wrote for Elizabethan England and that's where it will be set! There is no compromise when it comes to the classics! *(Meekly.)* How about Victorian England. At least it's the right country.

KELLY: There aren't very many "My Fair Lady" costumes. We might have to throw in some "South Pacific." I'll keep looking.

(KELLY EXITS. DREW ENTERS.)

DREW: *(With drama.)* "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt, Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew ..."

BEN: Oh no!

DREW: "... Or that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon against self-slaughter!" *(Out of character.)* I am so ready for this! I love being Hamlet! Where is my costume?

SARAH: In New Jersey.

DREW: Why is my costume in New Jersey?



SARAH: Because that's where the rental company shipped it. They seemed to have overlooked the fact that we are NOT IN New Jersey!

DREW: What am I supposed to wear?

BEN: How about a muumuu and a pair of flip-flops?

DREW: Very funny. My costume really isn't in New Jersey. (To BEN.) You're just jealous because I'm Hamlet and you're boring old Polonius!

BEN: Jealous of you? Hah! I am in no way jealous! And I should have been Hamlet! It's the role I was born to play!

DREW: I knew it! I knew you were jealous! (Chanting.) I get to kill you! I get to kill you!

BEN: I'm not jealous! And you're not any good!

DREW: I AM EXCELLENT! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! (To SARAH.) Does he?

SARAH: You know, I should be Hamlet.

DREW: You're a girl! Girls can't be Hamlet!

SARAH: Girls can too be Hamlet! Ashley's Guildenstern. If Guildenstern can be a girl, so can Hamlet!

DREW: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are minor characters!

WILL: So you're saying I'm not important?

DREW: You're important to the story. You're just not important any other way.

WILL: Well, that makes me feel better.

DREW: It doesn't matter if the minor characters are girls or boys! Hamlet matters! Hamlet cannot be a girl!

SARAH: Can so!

DREW / BEN: Can not!

SARAH: Can so!

DREW / BEN: Can not!

DREW: If Hamlet was a girl, what would Ophelia be?

SARAH: (Frustrated.) A monkey, for all I care! I hate being Ophelia!

DREW: You had better care! This is my big moment! I am auditioning for the Arts Conservatory and you two had better not mess it up!

BEN: (Coy.) I don't think the Hawaiian version of "Hamlet" is going to look all that great on your résumé.

DREW: We're NOT doing the Hawaiian version of "Hamlet"! Right, Miss Duncan? This is going to be authentic, right? You guys are just kidding because I'm so good and you're ... well ... average.

SARAH / BEN: (*Deeply offended.*) WHAT?

SARAH: Your lack of talent is only surpassed by your conceit and your lack of something to be conceited about.

DREW: (*Thinks.*) Is that an insult?

BEN: (*Arms around DREW'S shoulders.*) It's just a fact. Don't worry about it.

WILL: Maybe if Mrs. Hamlet threw Hamlet out of the house, and he had to move in with his friend, Horatio, after Mrs. Horatio threw HIM out of the house, and they were two guys living together, and Hamlet liked things clean and neat and Horatio was a slob ... and they played poker with their friends and smoked cigars, and it was like there were this odd kind of couple

SARAH: Forget it, Will.

(*DUNCAN'S cell phone RINGS.*)

DUNCAN: (*On phone.*) Whoever this is, it had better not be bad news! ... Jim? You should have been here thirty minutes ago! ... You're in the hospital? Well, that's not good. We are about to open. You WILL be out of the hospital by then. Won't you? ... It depends on how fast they can do an appendectomy? Why would you need an appendectomy now? ... Your appendix is about to rupture? Can't it wait? ... May I speak to your doctor? ... Hello? This is Deborah Duncan, the drama teacher at Stratford High School, and I need your patient here as soon as possible. You may operate on him after Act 5, but he has to be back tomorrow night, so you'd better do a good job! ... What do you mean he's being prepped for surgery? ... Don't you dare anesthetize my actor! What kind of sorry excuse for a doctor are you? ... Hello? He hung up.

SARAH: Jim's Horatio. That's a really important character. What are we going to do?

DUNCAN: (*To BEN.*) Can you do Horatio? Maybe Ashley can be Polonius.

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BEN: Let Drew do Horatio. I'll do Hamlet.
DREW: In your dreams, buster!
BEN: I should be Hamlet!
DREW: Should not!
BEN: SHOULD TOO!
DREW: SHOULD NOT!
BEN: SHOULD TOO!
SARAH: You're both wrong. I should be Hamlet!
DREW / BEN: SHOULD NOT!
SARAH: SHOULD TOO!
WILL: Maybe I should be Hamlet.
ALL: SHOULD NOT!
WILL: At least if I was Hamlet it would be funny.
DUNCAN: This is not helpful!
OTHERS: Sorry.
SARAH: My cousin Zack is a professional actor.
DUNCAN: (*Condescending.*) I'm sure your cousin is a fine actor, Sarah. But we're talking about "Hamlet" here!
SARAH: He graduated from the Arts Conservatory. He was in Shakespeare in the Park for three seasons. Last year he was in "Hamlet."
DUNCAN: Quick! Call him! (*Hands SARAH her phone.*)
SARAH: Do you know the number for the Pizza Palace?
DUNCAN: It's on speed dial.

(*SARAH dials.*)

DREW: (*Sarcastic.*) The Pizza Palace? That sounds like a good place to find a Shakespearian actor.
SARAH: His father owns the Pizza Palace. Zack helps out when he's not in rehearsals. (*On phone.*) Hello? Could I speak to Zachary Taylor, please?
DUNCAN: Your cousin's name is Zachary Taylor?
BEN: Wasn't he the president or something?
WILL: Shows how much you know. He was Elizabeth Taylor's boyfriend.
DUNCAN: Will, find Kelly and help her bring out all the "My Fair Lady" and "South Pacific" costumes.

(WILL EXITS SL.)

BEN: That should keep him busy. Those costumes are scattered all over the basement. And the stairs are that way. (Points SR.)

SARAH: (On phone.) This is his cousin, Sarah. Tell him to wash the garlic off his hands and come to the phone. (To OTHERS.) He makes a really good garlic and pesto sauce, but it kind of makes his clothes smell. (On phone.) Hello? Zack? It's Sarah. Your cousin. ... Your mother's sister's daughter. ... No. The other daughter. ... (Rolls eyes.) That's right. The high school brat. Didn't you do "Hamlet" last summer at Shakespeare in the Park? ... Your favorite play, huh. Yes. I'm sure you were outstanding. ... I'm sure your performance rivaled Ian McKellen's. ... Yes, I'm sure Ian McKellen never had people in the audience eating potato salad when he performed. What would it take for you to come to Stratford High School and be in our production of "Hamlet"? (To DUNCAN.) How many pizzas can we afford?

DUNCAN: As many as it takes.

SARAH: We'll buy all the pizzas you can make. How soon can you get here? ... Great. Come to the back door of the theater.

DREW: Are you sure the cousin of yours is up to it? I have very high standards.

BEN: It's a high school production, Drew. Your standards aren't any higher than anyone else's.

DUNCAN: Horatio will be late, but at least we have a Horatio.

SARAH: What about costumes?

DUNCAN: Street clothes or Hawaiian?

BEN: I vote for Hawaiian.

DREW: You can't be serious! I'm about to go on stage in the greatest role ever written for an English-speaking actor, and I'm supposed to look like Gilligan?

SARAH: You could wear a captain's hat and be the Skipper.

BEN: Or you could wear a dress and be Mary Ann.

DREW: That is not funny! Isn't there at least one appropriate costume for me?

BEN: My little sister might have something for you. How about Sesame Street pajamas and a teddy bear?

DREW: I am not doing Hamlet in your sister's pj's! Especially opposite a professional actor! *(To SARAH.)* Does your cousin have any big connections?

BEN: Are you planning a career in pizza making?

DREW: I'm planning a career in theater!

DUNCAN: Let's find Will and Kelly, and see about costuming this play. *(Sighs.)* I knew we should have done "Grease" again.

(THEY EXIT. ASHLEY and KATHY ENTER.)

ASHLEY: These are the hardest lines I have ever tried to memorize. I can't remember my part!

KATHY: Aren't you supposed to be some kind of guy?

ASHLEY: I'm Gildencrantz. Or Rosenbrick. Or somebody like that. I go off to England and Hamlet kills me.

KATHY: I really don't get "Hamlet." I tried to watch the movie.

ASHLEY: Was it any good?

KATHY: I don't know. I went to sleep.

ASHLEY: I told my parents and all my friends it's going to be terrible and not to come.

KATHY: That's good.

ASHLEY: No, it isn't. They think I'm lying and they're all coming. Even my piano teacher.

KATHY: At least you get to go to England. I'm Gertrude. I have to hang around till the bitter end. And when my little brother found out my name in the play, he and his friends started calling me "Gertrude!" The little creep! I ought to give him a wedgie and make him read "Hamlet" out loud!

ASHLEY: Why did it have to be "Hamlet"? I really loved that play we did last year. About the newlyweds living in the New York apartment without any furniture. That's the only reason I joined the drama club.

KATHY: And now we not only have "Hamlet," we have Drew as Hamlet. That guy is the most conceited person in the school. I tried to tell him what a great job he was doing in rehearsals ... not that I meant it or anything ... and he kind of sneered at me and wouldn't speak.

ASHLEY: *(Sighs.)* I really miss "Barefoot in the Dark."

KATHY: Me, too.

(MRS. QUINCE ENTERS, startling ASHLEY and KATHY.)

QUINCE: Girls. Have you seen Miss Duncan?

ASHLEY: Oh! Mrs. Quince. I think she's in the basement having a costume crisis.

QUINCE: *(To ASHLEY.)* Would you tell her I need to speak with her?

(ASHLEY EXITS. KATHY smiles uncomfortably. She tries to think of something to say.)

KATHY: So, Mrs. Quince. What's it like being the principal? A real power trip, I bet.

QUINCE: Excuse me?

KATHY: You know. You have this life and death power over students. You can suspend them. You can put them on probation. Like my older brother. He thinks you tried to keep him out of college because he and his friends tied soft drink cans to the tail pipe of your car. He still talks about you. Nothing negative, of course. Well, not too negative.

QUINCE: Have you been in my office before, young lady?

KATHY: No, ma'am. Not yet. But the year's young. Well, it's almost over. But there's always next year.

QUINCE: Are you trying to be funny?

KATHY: Oh. No, ma'am. I just really admire all of the power you have. I was thinking about you the other day in World History. We're studying the Fascists in the Second World War.

QUINCE: You are being rude!

KATHY: I'm sorry! I don't mean to be rude! When I get nervous I start talking and I always say the wrong things. You know. Like how out-of-date your clothes are, and that car you drive looks like it came from the funeral home. I really can't help it. Did I tell you how nice your hair always looks? It looks great! Like those mothers on those 1950s sit-coms. They stay at home all day cooking and cleaning the house, and waiting for their husbands to come home from work and tell them what to do.

(DUNCAN and ASHLEY ENTER. Duncan carries a stack of Hawaiian shirts and wears a stack of leis around her neck.)

ASHLEY: Why would the principal come to the theater? She doesn't care about anything except the football team, and getting her face on television. *(SHE realizes QUINCE has heard her conversation.)* Oops. *(Ala Eddie Haskell.)* Good afternoon, Mrs. Quince. That's a lovely outfit you're wearing.

QUINCE: Miss Duncan. I'd like a word with you. *(KATHY and ASHLEY smile.)* Alone. *(KATHY and ASHLEY frown.)*

DUNCAN: You girls can help Kelly with the costumes. And I think we've lost Will again. Last time he ended up in the chemistry lab. Send someone to look for him. *(KATHY and ASHLEY EXIT.)*

QUINCE: Drama students certainly are odd.

DUNCAN: That's what makes them drama students. I have a real dilemma, Mrs. Quince. My costumes haven't arrived.

QUINCE: Well, that's too bad. I know your play is about to open, and I know this is important to you.

DUNCAN: It really is. We even received an arts grant to help with the expenses.

QUINCE: That's good. We don't want our school paying for things we can't afford.

DUNCAN: Mrs. Quince, our theater department is known around the state! We bring prestige and notoriety to Stratford High School! We participate in forensic tournaments and we win awards!

QUINCE: Of course you do. Now, I just want to review what we talked about last spring when you presented that OTHER play. "Bear Feet in the Park," or whatever it was called. You remember all of the complaints I received from parents?

DUNCAN: I remember one parent who thought the play was inappropriate. But really, Mrs. Quince, "Barefoot in the Park" is an old-fashioned romantic comedy. It's been around forever. It's practically a classic!

QUINCE: I don't know very much about the theater, including why people do it in the first place, but I understand our school has an outstanding theater department. That's good. As long as no one complains about anything.

DUNCAN: But, theater has always generated controversy.
That's one of the functions of art!

QUINCE: Not at my school! Let's review. This play is to have
NO innuendos that could be interpreted as risqué.

DUNCAN: I'm not sure what you mean by risqué.

QUINCE: And dirty words! There are to be NO dirty words!

DUNCAN: We're doing "Hamlet"!

QUINCE: Is it one of those zany things set in a New York
apartment?

DUNCAN: *(Frustrated.)* No! It's by Shakespeare!

QUINCE: So you're saying it's old.

DUNCAN: It's over 400 years old.

QUINCE: And there's no foolishness?

DUNCAN: *(Taken aback.)* I don't think so.

QUINCE: Good. We really can't have that kind of thing at
Stratford High School. That would be almost as bad as
violence on stage.

DUNCAN: Uh oh.

KELLY: *(ENTERS.)* Miss Duncan. We don't have enough
muumuus for the girls. Can we use some of the skirts from
"Grease"?

DUNCAN: I need to go, Mrs. Quince.

QUINCE: I'm going to be at your performance tonight. I don't
want to be. But I'm going to be there, just the same. And I
expect to see good, clean, boring family entertainment!

*(DUNCAN and KELLY EXIT. ZACK ENTERS, wearing an
Elizabethan costume. He startles QUINCE.)*

ZACK: *(Booming voice.)* "To be, or not to be: that is the
question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The slings
and arrows of outrageous fortune, / Or to take arms against a
sea of troubles"

QUINCE: Who are you? What are you doing in my school? And
where did you get that ridiculous outfit? We have a dress code,
you know!

*(ZACK begins to pace around QUINCE, making her very
nervous.)*

ZACK: "And by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep – / No more – and by a sleep to say we end. / The heartache and the thousand natural shocks. / That flesh is heir to!"

QUINCE: Do you have a visitor pass, buddy? If not, you are in trouble! *(Sniffs.)* You smell like an old pizza! Who are you?

ZACK: "'Tis a consummation. / Devoutly to be wished."

QUINCE: That does it! I'm taking you to campus security! *(SHE grabs HIM by the shoulder and the seat of his pants and drags him offstage.)*

ZACK: Hey! What are you doing? I'm supposed to be here! This IS the right high school, isn't it?

(THEY EXIT. DREW and DUNCAN ENTER. Drew wears a Hawaiian shirt and lei. Duncan nervously looks around for ZACK.)

DUNCAN: Where is Sarah's cousin? He's had plenty of time to get here!

DREW: Miss Duncan, I need to talk with you.

DUNCAN: Don't tell me your appendix hurts! I don't believe I could take it.

DREW: No, ma'am. My appendix is fine. This play is very important to me.

DUNCAN: Yes, Drew. I know. Do you suppose he was tied up in traffic?

DREW: You know I'm auditioning at the Arts Conservatory.

DUNCAN: I wrote a reference for you. Remember? I've never had a student accepted before. I'm hoping you're my first.

DREW: Well, I sort of thought this production was going to be really great. I can see now it won't be.

DUNCAN: Drew! Don't be such a pessimist! As a professional actor you will be in some great productions, and some that are not so great. Most high schools wouldn't even attempt to do "Hamlet." It's been an incredible challenge for all of us. Our cast and crew have worked very hard on this production. It just has to turn out all right.

DREW: You're right, Miss Duncan.



DUNCAN: Look on the bright side. At least no one from the conservatory will ever see this fiasco.

DREW: Actually, someone will. They're sending a member of the faculty to watch me tonight. A guy named Dr. Lucius Barrymore.

DUNCAN: *(SHE clutches her chest as if about to collapse.)* You can't be serious!

DREW: I can't?

DUNCAN: No. Lucius Barrymore is one of the best drama coaches in the country! He's an indirect descendent of John Barrymore!

DREW: Is that good?

DUNCAN: John Barrymore was one of the greatest actors of the American stage! One of his greatest triumphs was ... "Hamlet."

DREW: So you're saying it's good.

DUNCAN: No! It's bad! We don't have costumes, or makeup, or Horatio! If Lucius Barrymore sees this mess we're about to perform, not only will I be the laughingstock of all the drama teachers in the country, I don't think it will help your chances of going to the Arts Conservatory.

DREW: Oh no! What can I do? It's been my life's dream to go to the conservatory! It's been my dream to perform on stage! Ever since I was a little boy and my parents took me to see Disney on Ice!

DUNCAN: Disney on Ice?

DREW: I think it was Winnie the Pooh that did it.

DUNCAN: Can you call Dr. Barrymore and tell him not to come?

DREW: What do I say?

DUNCAN: Be honest. Never try to hide the truth.

DREW: So I tell him we're doing "Hamlet" in the tropics because our costumes are in New Jersey?

DUNCAN: No. Tell him ... uh ... you won't be on stage tonight because you're in the hospital having emergency surgery.

DREW: You call that being honest?

DUNCAN: When honesty won't work, try something else.

(BEN ENTERS and crosses to DUNCAN.)

BEN: Kelly says we're running out of Hawaiian shirts. Could Gertrude look like Frenchie from "Grease"?

DUNCAN: I'd better check on this. (*Hands DREW her cell phone.*) Call Dr. Barrymore and tell him not to come tonight.

(*SHE EXITS SL.*)

DREW: I can't do that! What would he think? Hey, Ben. Wanna do me a favor?

BEN: Wanna let me be Hamlet?

DREW: Come on. This is important. I'd help you out.

BEN: Not that I believe you, but okay. What is it?

DREW: Call Dr. Lucius Barrymore. (*Reaches in HIS pocket and brings out a slip of paper.*) Here's the number. Tell him "Hamlet" has been canceled for tonight. Do not attend "Hamlet"!

BEN: (*Hopeful.*) Has "Hamlet" been canceled?

DREW: No.

BEN: Who is Dr. Lucius Barrymore and why am I doing this?

DREW: Just do it! I'm getting nervous! My stomach hurts!

(*HE quickly EXITS SL. SARAH ENTERS SR.*)

SARAH: Where is Miss Duncan?

BEN: (*Pointing SL.*) She went that way. What's up?

SARAH: We found a box of costumes that says Shakespeare.

BEN: Great.

SARAH: They're on a shelf in the basement, but nobody can reach them.

BEN: I'll get them. (*Hands SARAH the cell phone and the slip of paper.*) Here. Call this number and tell the doctor to stay home.

SARAH: Do I look like your secretary?

BEN: Do you want that box of costumes or not?

(*HE EXITS. ASHLEY ENTERS wearing a grass skirt.*)

SARAH: What is that?

ASHLEY: It's a grass skirt. Kelly said I had to wear it. We ran out of muumuus.

SARAH: Guildenstern is supposed to get killed in that? Somehow I think the dramatic impact will be diminished.

DUNCAN: *(Offstage.)* Sarah! Would you come here please?

(SARAH hands ASHLEY the cell phone and the number.)

SARAH: Do me a favor. Dial this number and tell whoever answers to stay away.

ASHLEY: Why?

SARAH: Just do it.

(SARAH EXITS. KATHY ENTERS wearing a poodle skirt.)

ASHLEY: I guess all the important actors get to wear the cool costumes.

KATHY: You think this is a cool costume? Not only is my name Gertrude, I look like an idiot! Do you know how much mileage my little brother is going to get out of this? I wish I could make my family stay home tonight.

ASHLEY: If you're really my friend, call this number. *(Hands KATHY the phone and number.)*

KATHY: What are you talking about?

ASHLEY: I don't know. Sarah shoved this in my hands and told me to call this number. It must be some kind of joke. I'm going to the ladies' room and cry.

(ASHLEY EXITS. WILL ENTERS. He carries a baseball jersey.)

KATHY: Where have you been?

WILL: I went to look for costumes and I ended up in the locker room at the gym. The baseball team doesn't like it when you look through their lockers. They threatened to use my derriere for a baseball.

KATHY: They used the term "derriere"?

WILL: Yeah. What's a derriere?

KATHY: It's where you sit down.

WILL: Oh. Like a chair?

KATHY: *(Rolls eyes.)* Right. Why were you looking through their lockers?

WILL: I was looking for costumes. Will this work? *(Holds up a jersey.)* The pitcher wears it. It doesn't look very Hawaiian.

(KELLY ENTERS.)

KELLY: *(To KATHY.)* I need to make you up.

KATHY: I thought Jan had all the makeup.

KELLY: We're running out of time. I melted some of the stuff I found here in the microwave. Hurry up before it turns back into cement.

KATHY: What about the phone?

KELLY: Come on, Kathy! It's getting late!

KATHY: *(Hands KELLY the phone.)* Dial this number.

KELLY: Why?

KATHY: I have no idea.

(KATHY EXITS. JOSH ENTERS with cold cream covering his face.)

WILL: You look like you're wearing whipped cream.

JOSH: It doesn't taste like whipped cream. *(To KELLY.)* I think you'd better scrape this stuff off. It's starting to burn.

KELLY: It's cold cream. It can't burn.

JOSH: It's HOT cream and it hurts! Please, Kelly!

(KELLY hands the phone to WILL.)

KELLY: Here. Call this number.

WILL: What do I say?

KELLY: I have no idea. Just call them.

(KELLY and JOSH EXIT. WILL looks at the number and dials.)

WILL: Hello? ... Who's this? ... Lucius Barrymore? What kind of name is that? ... My name came up on your caller ID? ... Duncan? I'm not Duncan. She's our drama teacher at Stratford High School. We're doing this play.

WILL: *(Continued.)* You've probably never heard of it. It's called "Hamlet," and it really stinks. ... You're coming to see it? ... Okay. It's your nickel. ... Drew? Yeah. He's Hamlet. Personally, I don't think he's all that great. When we were in middle school we did this play and he got so scared he threw up back stage. ... Are you sure you want to come see this thing? It's going to be awful ... I'm Rosenburk. Look for me. ... Okay. Nice talking with you.

(WILL puts the phone in his pocket and EXITS. DUNCAN, SARAH and BEN ENTER from the other side of the stage.)

BEN: Well, that was a waste.

DUNCAN: The box said Shakespeare.

BEN: But it was togas!

DUNCAN: I guess somewhere in the distant past Stratford High School did "Julius Caesar."

SARAH: They did it with old yellow togas.

DUNCAN: Maybe Gertrude should wear one of the "My Fair Lady" gowns.

BEN: Most of them are full of holes. Somebody didn't think about moths.

DUNCAN: We'll cover the holes. *(To SARAH.)* Where is your cousin? He should have been here by now.

SARAH: I'll call. Where's your phone?

(DUNCAN feels around in her pockets.)

DUNCAN: I had it a minute ago. What did I do with it? Let's see. I gave it to Drew.

BEN: You know Drew always gets the leads. It's not fair to the rest of us. We work hard, too.

DUNCAN: Drew is a senior. You won't have to worry about him next year.

BEN: I don't worry about him THIS year. I just don't like him.

SARAH: Nobody who lives on this planet likes him.

DUNCAN: I just found out there's going to be a representative from the Arts Conservatory in the audience watching Drew. It's important we do our best for him. *(BEN and SARAH grin.)*

BEN: *(Slyly.)* Oh. It's important to Drew.

SARAH: We'll give Drew all he deserves.

(BEN and SARAH high-five each other. JOSH and KELLY ENTER.)

DUNCAN: Hopefully, nothing else can go wrong.

JOSH: Jack just called. He's parked on the side of the freeway.

KELLY: He said there's stuff leaking out from under his car and the check-engine light is on.

JOSH: He said the manifold fell off. What's a manifold?

DUNCAN: Did he get the makeup kits? *(KELLY hands DUNCAN her cell phone.)*

KELLY: You want to talk to him?

DUNCAN: *(To KELLY.)* This is my phone! Where did you get it?

KELLY: From Will. He was talking to the psychic hotline when Jack called. I think Sister Clare is on hold.

DUNCAN: *(On phone.)* Hello? Jack? Did you get the makeup kits? ... Well, can't you drive with the check-engine light on? ... Why don't you try ... we really need those makeup kits! ... Okay. Don't get any speeding tickets, but HURRY! *(SHE hands SARAH the cell phone.)* Here. See what's happened to your cousin. And hang up on Sister Clare!

(SARAH dials. She talks on the phone, unheard by the audience. ASHLEY and KATHY ENTER. Kathy wears a Victorian gown that is too long for her. She limps. Ashley assists. She sits in a chair.)

ASHLEY: Miss Duncan, Kathy fell down the steps. She tripped on the "My Fair Lady" gown.

DUNCAN: I thought she was wearing a grass skirt.

KELLY: We changed her costume.

DUNCAN: Are you all right?

KATHY: It feels like when I sprained my ankle playing soccer.

DUNCAN: But you're Gertrude! You can't hop around on one foot!

BEN: I saw some crutches in the prop room.

ASHLEY: She needs to go to the hospital. *(Hopefully.)* Can I take her? Please?

DUNCAN: After the play. *(To BEN.)* Go find those crutches.

(SARAH finishes her conversation and hands the phone back to DUNCAN.)

SARAH: They said Zack left as soon as I called. He should have been here by now.

DUNCAN: *(Desperate.)* Where could he be?

(QUINCE ENTERS.)

SARAH: Also, Sister Clare says you're in for some troubled times, but your love life will improve after the first of the month. And you owe her three hundred dollars.

DUNCAN: WHAT?

QUINCE: Miss Duncan. I need to talk with you.

DUNCAN: *(Frustrated.)* What is it, Mrs. Quince?

QUINCE: I found out that this "Hamlet" business is a really big event. It's in the newspaper and the television station ran a feature about it. A very positive report. I like that.

DUNCAN: I'm so happy you're happy, Mrs. Quince.

QUINCE: Good publicity for the school. Can't get enough of that. We got a call. People are coming tonight from the state arts council. They'll be in the audience tonight.

DUNCAN: Oh, please no! *(QUINCE starts to leave.)*

QUINCE: Oh, one other thing. There is a character in the campus security office who claims to be a part of your little production.

DUNCAN: What are you talking about?

QUINCE: He's dressed funny, he smells funny, he's acting funny. What was I to think?

SARAH: Did you have my cousin arrested?

(WILL ENTERS followed by BEN with crutches, which he gives to KATHY.)

QUINCE: I didn't know he was anybody's cousin! He should have come by the office for a visitor pass.

BEN: The office is closed!

QUINCE: That's no excuse! Rules are rules!

DUNCAN: *(To SARAH.)* Go find your cousin and bring him here.

BEN: I hope they didn't rough him up too badly. Those campus security guys can be tough.

SARAH: *(To QUINCE.)* You ever hear of police brutality? My cousin is an artiste!

QUINCE: Your artiste smells like a can of parmesan cheese!

(SARAH EXITS. The cell phone RINGS. DUNCAN answers.)

DUNCAN: Hello? ... Jack? Did you get the makeup kits? ... Great! ... *(To OTHERS.)* He got the makeup kits. *(On phone.)* What's that? ... Car trouble?

QUINCE: This whole theater thing is beyond me. It's a lot of expense. A lot of extra work.

DUNCAN: How far away are you? I'll send someone to get them.

QUINCE: It takes electricity, it takes custodial service, and what do we get? Complaints from parents. My daughter didn't get a good part. My son didn't get a part at all. That play was too long. It was boring. It was inappropriate.

DUNCAN: *(On phone.)* I'm sorry your car is on fire. Where are you?

QUINCE: If students want to express themselves, they should be on the football team! Or in the National Honor Society, or ... the French club.

DUNCAN: *(On phone.)* Good. That's not too far.

QUINCE: Or the band. Or the chess club.

DUNCAN: *(On phone.)* WHAT?

QUINCE: Why are you yelling, Miss Duncan?

DUNCAN: That can't be! *(Hangs up the phone.)*

BEN: What happened?

DUNCAN: The makeup kits burned up in the fire.

WILL: At least you have Hamlet.

(DREW ENTERS holding his stomach.)

DREW: I'm so scared, I'm going to lose my lunch!

ALL: Ooo! Gross! *(THEY quickly move away from HIM.)*

DREW: I don't want to be Hamlet! I want my mommy!

BEN: I could be Hamlet! With a little prompting I know I could do it! "To be or not to be! That is the question!" ... What comes next?

(SARAH and ZACK ENTER.)

ZACK: *(To QUINCE.)* "O most pernicious woman! / O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!" /

QUINCE: Watch your language, young man!

ZACK: "Remember thee? / Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat. / In this distracted globe"

DREW: *(Perking up.)* Hey! Those are my lines!

BEN: Not any more they're not! They're mine! *(To ZACK.)* How'd that go again?

DREW: "Remember thee? / Yea, from the table of my memory. / I'll wipe away all trivial fond records"

QUINCE: I have no idea what you're talking about.

BEN: You have stage fright. Remember? I wanna be Hamlet!

DREW: I just got better! I wanna be Hamlet!

DUNCAN: *(To ZACK.)* Why are you doing Hamlet? You're not supposed to be Hamlet!

ZACK: I'm not? Why am I here?

DUNCAN: You're to be Horatio! We already have Hamlet!

ZACK: I can't do Horatio.

SARAH: Why not?

ZACK: It's a really big part. And I don't know it. *(To SARAH.)* You said you wanted me to do Hamlet.

SARAH: I meant be IN "Hamlet." I want you to BE Horatio!

ZACK: I've never been Horatio before in my life!

DUNCAN: Oh no!

KELLY: How about cue cards! I'll rip up a script and he can read it!



DUNCAN: Good idea!

ZACK: That won't work.

KELLY: Why not?

ZACK: There's a problem. See, I can memorize like crazy.

That's how I made it through the Arts Conservatory. But when it comes to reading ... well ... (*Embarrassed.*) I'm dyslexic.

WILL: Don't feel bad. I'm nearsighted.

ZACK: I'm better than I used to be ... but I can't read very well. Especially under pressure.

BEN: How do you memorize scripts?

ZACK: From tapes. And ... well ... my mother reads them to me. Look, I'll try. But I already know the role of Hamlet.

DUNCAN: So, we don't have the costumes we rented, we have no makeup, we have two Hamlets, no Horatio, and Gertrude is on crutches. We have an actor who can't read, another who's losing his Cheerios, and the costumes we're going to use look like "Nick at Night" reruns. Not to mention the little fact that representatives from the state arts council are going to be in the audience!

SARAH: Don't forget Will.

(WILL beams with pride.)

DUNCAN: And we have Will. Thank goodness Dr. Barrymore won't be here.

WILL: Oh. Yes, he will be here. I talked to him on the phone.

DUNCAN / DREW: OH NO!

DREW: I'm going to be sick again! (*Runs OFFSTAGE.*)

WILL: (*Sniffs ZACK.*) I've got an idea. Let's go out for pizza after the performance. (*Continues to sniff ZACK.*)

QUINCE: Sounds like everything is under control. Go break legs, or whatever it is you actor people do to each other.

BLACKOUT

END ACT I

ACT II

(During the blackout, low house LIGHTS may come up. LUCIUS BARRYMORE ENTERS from the back of the theater and walks to the empty seat in the front. He carries a pad on which he will make notes. LIGHTS go down.)

(AT RISE: That evening. DUNCAN and DREW are on the Stratford High stage and SR wing space. Drew wears a Hawaiian shirt, jams and lei. He may also wear knee socks and dress shoes.)

DUNCAN: I'm sure he won't be here. I personally left a message on his voice mail.

DREW: Why don't we just cancel it?

DUNCAN: If we cancel, we lose the grant money. The grant was for three performances starting tonight. Besides, we have an audience, and my English lit students are getting credit for attending. Some of them need all the help they can get.

DREW: How is Sarah's idiotic cousin going to do Horatio? He's never done the part before.

DUNCAN: Kelly says she has the cue cards all ready. I'm not sure what she came up with, but at this point we really can't be picky.

DREW: It's going to be awful! It's going to be worse than awful!

DUNCAN: *(Reassuringly.)* Just remember that first inspiration, that first experience, that first passion you felt for the stage!

DREW: Disney on Ice?

DUNCAN: Whatever. Just remember how many people over the centuries have brought their individual interpretations, their emotions, their life experiences to the role you are about to play! You are about to join a long line of actors who have played one of the finest roles ever written in the English language!

DREW: *(Inspired.)* I'm gonna be Hamlet!

DUNCAN: You're gonna be Hamlet!

(DREW EXITS.)

DUNCAN: *(Continued.)* And I'm gonna be really embarrassed. I could have let someone else teach drama. But no! I had to teach drama. Not only that, I had to try and direct "Hamlet." What was I thinking? *(SHE moves and addresses the audience.)* Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Tonight we are proud to present William Shakespeare's "The Tragedy of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark." We've had some last-minute challenges. Our costumes went to New Jersey, our makeup up in flames, but we're confident that this will be a great theatrical experience for you. One of our actors decided this would be a good time to have his appendix removed. We've brought in a professional actor to play Horatio. We're honored to have Zachary Taylor, a graduate of the Arts Conservatory, with us this evening. It's just too bad he's never played Horatio before, but the show must go on. *(Looks out into the audience.)* It looks kind of crowded. Would some of you rather come back tomorrow night? *(Beat.)* No? Feel free. *(Beat.)* I really wish you'd go away and come back later ... after we fix a few things. For those of you who are staying ... well ... we're doing our best. And to our guests from the state arts council ... please forgive us.

(SHE crosses SR and looks SL, as if standing in the wing space and looking at the stage. BEN, SARAH and KELLY stand next to her. All three are dressed in Hawaiian clothes.)

SARAH: Wow. I've never heard a director apologize for a production in the curtain speech before.

DUNCAN: I just kind of went blank and my mouth started going and I didn't know what I was saying.

KELLY: I liked it.

BEN: *(Looking SL.)* What's happening on stage?

DUNCAN: They just started Act I.

KELLY: I hope my idea for Horatio works.

SARAH: I didn't know Zack was dyslexic! No one in my family ever tells me anything!

DUNCAN: Zack's about to enter.

(ZACK ENTERS SL. He wears his costume, but holds a surfboard onto which are taped lines of the script.)

DUNCAN: Marcellus gives him his cue: "...hath he gone by our watch ..." What is he holding?

KELLY: A surfboard. His cue cards are taped all over it.

ZACK: *(Confident, not looking at the surfboard.)* "In what particular thought to work I know not!"

DUNCAN: It looks awful! ... Think it'll work?

SARAH: Not if he can't read.

ZACK: "This bodes some strange eruption to our state."

BEN: He's pretty good. Too bad he can't be Hamlet.

DUNCAN: Here comes the first big soliloquy. *(SHE crosses her fingers.)*

ZACK: "That can I. At least the whisper goes so: our last king,"
... Uh. ... "Our last king ..." *(HE squints at the surfboard, then removes reading glasses from his pocket and looks at the board.)*

SARAH: Uh oh.

(ZACK squints, stares, and finally turns the board upside down and reads a cue card taped to the other side.)

ZACK: Uh ... "Our last king, whose ... now ... appeared ... valiant ... uh ... haste-post."

DUNCAN: That's posthaste!

ZACK: "Of this ... land ... the ... in!" *(HE removes the glasses, nervously grins, then strikes a regal pose.)*

KELLY: Wow. That was really short.

DUNCAN: It's supposed to be about twenty-seven lines!

SARAH: The Ghost is about to enter. *(To KELLY.)* How does his makeup look?

KELLY: Well, I went across the street to the drug store and I found a makeup kit. But it might not be exactly right.

(JOSH ENTERS. He's made up like a clown.)

KELLY: *(Continued.)* That's all they had.

DUNCAN: Oh no!

BEN: He looks like a clown.

(ZACK EXITS.)

KELLY: It was between a clown, a cat and a zombie.

DUNCAN: Horatio is not supposed to leave!

(JOSH stands for a moment, then EXITS and brings ZACK back ONSTAGE. They stand still for a moment. Josh smiles.)

JOSH: You're supposed to ask me if I can speak?

ZACK: *(In character.)* "Can you speak?" ... *(Stage whisper.)*
You're not speaking.

JOSH: I don't have any lines.

ZACK: Well, this is awkward.

JOSH: You have a speech. Check your surfboard.

(ZACK looks at the surfboard but can't find his place. JOSH turns the surfboard over and points. Zack puts on his reading glasses. He squints and tries to read the cue card.)

ZACK: "Oh, speak. ... earth of womb ... the."

(JOSH EXITS.)

DUNCAN: This isn't going to work!

SARAH: I never knew my cousin was such a ... a ...

BEN: Verbally-challenged person?

SARAH: I was thinking of the word "moron."

KELLY: I think he's kind of cute. But he smells like pasta sauce.

(KATHY and DREW ENTER the stage area. She uses the crutches and tries to hold up the gown.)

KATHY: "Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off."

DREW / ZACK: "Ah, Madame, it is common."

DREW: Hey! I'm Hamlet!

ZACK: Sorry. I know this part.

DREW: So do I!

(DREW steps up to KATHY, kicking her injured foot. She yells in pain.)

DREW: *(Continued.)* Sorry.

ZACK: *(Steps forward and upstages DREW.)* 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother ..."

DREW: *(Pushes ZACK back.)* Oh no, you don't! *(Steps forward.)* "Nor customary suits of solemn black ..." *(Pauses, forgetting the lines.)*

ZACK: *(Cuing DREW.)* "Nor the fruitful river in the eye ..."

DREW: I know it! Don't tell me!

ZACK: Well, say it!

DREW: Stop it! You're making me nervous!

DUNCAN: The only way this will work is for Hamlet and Horatio to change places. At least Drew can read.

BEN: He's really going to be mad. *(Gleefully.)* Can I be the one to tell him? Please?

DUNCAN: What happened to the scene with Polonius?

BEN: They skipped over it. I can go out and do it anyway. *(BEN crosses to the actors.)* "He hath, my Lord ..."

DREW: *(Stage whisper.)* What are you doing?

BEN: Miss Duncan wants to see you. *(DREW crosses to DUNCAN.)* "I do beseech you, go. Go. Away with you, false Hamlet!" *(To ZACK.)* You're on, pizza man. You're Hamlet.

ZACK: Where are we?

BEN: Denmark.

ZACK: I mean in the script?

BEN: Somewhere in Act I.

ZACK: How about Scene 5? I love Scene 5.

BEN: Fine with me.

ZACK: I need the Ghost.

(BEN EXITS SL and returns with JOSH. He then crosses to DUNCAN.)

BEN: We're moving ahead.

ZACK: *(With drama.)* "Whiter wilt thou lead me? Speak: I'll go no further."

JOSH: *(Dull, uninspired.)* "Mark me."

ZACK: "I will."

JOSH: (*Struggling with the lines.*) "My hour is almost come, when I to sulf'rous and tormenting flames must render up myself."

ZACK: "Alas, poor ghost."

KATHY: I don't think I'm supposed to hear this. (*With difficulty SHE crosses to DUNCAN. JOSH EXITS SL.*) Did I miss something?

KELLY: About three scenes.

DREW: Why is HE Hamlet? I'm Hamlet!

BEN: (*Smiling.*) Not any more.

DUNCAN: Would you please be Horatio? Just for tonight?

BEN: If you'd cast ME as Hamlet, and Drew as boring old Polonius, then when Jim went to the hospital Drew could be Horatio and Sarah's cousin could come in here and ruin the role of Polonius, which is much smaller than Hamlet or Horatio.

SARAH: Not only does that make no sense whatsoever, it also gives me a headache to think about it.

DREW: You're just jealous!

BEN: Am not!

DUNCAN: Keep it down!

DREW: (*Loud whisper.*) AM SO!

BEN: (*Loud whisper.*) AM NOT!

DUNCAN: I could go out and stop this crime against theater, but we'd lose our grant money for sure.

ZACK: (*Dramatically.*) "It is adieu, adieu, remember me."

DUNCAN: Horatio is on.

DREW: But I don't know Horatio!

BEN: It's on the surfboard. (*HE shoves DREW toward ZACK. Drew takes the surfboard and looks for the cues.*)

DREW: Uh ... "There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave to tell us this."

ZACK: "Why, right you are in the right ..." But you skipped about four pages of script.

DREW: "There is no offense, my lord." (*Stage whisper to DUNCAN.*) These cue cards aren't in order!

DUNCAN: (*To KELLY.*) Why aren't the cue cards in order?

KELLY: Sorry. I was in a hurry.

ZACK: "Yes, but there is, Horatio. And much offense, too. Touching this vision here ..." *(HE reaches back to touch JOSH, who isn't there.)* This vision that used to be here ... I don't know what happened to the vision, but he's supposed to be right here. *(JOSH is pushed back onstage. He bumps into ZACK.)*

BEN: Looks like his vision is back.

ZACK: "Never make known what you have seen tonight."

DREW: *(Reading the surfboard.)* "Propose the oath, my lord."

ZACK: "Never speak of what you have seen."

DREW: *(Trying to find HIS place on the surfboard.)* Uh ... okay. Right.

ZACK: "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit."

(ZACK and DREW EXIT. After a moment, Drew ENTERS and pulls JOSH offstage.)

BEN: Boy, Act I never went by that fast in rehearsal.

SARAH: *(To BEN.)* I guess we're on. *(SARAH and BEN cross SL.)* "O my lord, my lord, I have been so frightened!"

BEN: "With what?"

SARAH: "Lord Hamlet, his head and stockings fouled, / Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other, / To speak horrors he comes before me."

BEN: "Mad for love?"

(ASHLEY and WILL ENTER SR and stand with DUNCAN.)

SARAH: "Truly I do fear it."

ASHLEY: How did we get to Act II so fast?

DUNCAN: Don't ask. Get ready for your scene.

KATHY: *(Hobbles SL.)* "Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern." *(Nothing happens. KATHY clears her throat.)* "Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!" *(SHE looks SR at ASHLEY and WILL. Ashley ENTERS.)* "Welcome, dear ... Guildencrantz ..."

DUNCAN: *(To WILL.)* What are you waiting for? That's your cue!

WILL: It is?

(DUNCAN pushes WILL onstage. BEN crosses to Duncan.)

KATHY: "And Rosenberg."

BEN: I'd say I thought it was going well, but I'd be lying. This is like the worst thing I've ever seen. But it's making Drew look like an idiot, so I'm happy.

KATHY: "Thanks, Rosenstern and gentle Guildenkrantz."

ASHLEY: "We here give up ourselves in full service."

BEN: *(To DUNCAN.)* That's my cue. *(HE crosses into the scene.)* "The ambassadors from Norway are joyfully returned. / Give first admittance to the ambassadors. / My news shall be the fruit to that great feast."

(DREW and JOSH ENTER SR and stand with KELLY and DUNCAN.)

DREW: This is the worst night of my life!

JOSH: What's so bad about it? People in the audience are laughing.

DREW: It's not supposed to be funny!

BEN: "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it."

(ZACK ENTERS.)

ZACK: "You cannot take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal – except my life."

ASHLEY: *(To WILL.)* You have a line.

WILL: I do?

ASHLEY: Tell him farewell.

WILL: *(To ZACK.)* Uh ... farewell.

BEN: *(To WILL.)* Tell ME farewell. I'M about to exit.

WILL: *(Steps forward, with regal pomp.)* Farewell. *(HE steps back.)*

ASHLEY: *(To BEN.)* "My honored lord!" *(SHE elbows WILL.)*

WILL: Farewell? *(BEN crosses to DUNCAN.)*

ZACK: "My excellent friends! How dost thou, Gildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?"

ASHLEY: "Happy in that we are not overhappy." *(SHE elbows WILL.)*

WILL: *(With confidence.)* Farewell!

DREW: This will go on for a while.

JOSH: Don't be so sure. Will doesn't remember a single line.

WILL: Farewell!

KELLY: Except one.

(QUINCE ENTERS SR.)

QUINCE: Miss Duncan. *(SHE startles DUNCAN.)*

DUNCAN: Mrs. Quince. What is it now?

QUINCE: I'm not following this at all, but the audience seems to be enjoying it. They're laughing out loud.

DREW: It's not supposed to be funny! *(QUINCE gives DREW a threatening look.)* Unless you want it to be funny ... ma'am.

KELLY: I think they're about to finish Act II.

JOSH: It goes a lot faster when Will leaves out all his lines.

ZACK: "Ay, so, good bye to you. – Now I am alone." *(Looks at the other ACTORS.)* I said, "Now I am alone!" ... How can I be alone if you're still on stage?

(KATHY, SARAH, ASHLEY and WILL cross to DUNCAN.)

ZACK: *(Continued.)* "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! / Is it not monstrous that this player here, / But in fiction, in a dream of passion, / Could force his soul so to his own conceit!"

WILL: This is starting to remind me of "Barefoot in the Dark." Except we all knew our lines for that one.

ASHLEY: There's something about hearing the audience laugh.

DREW: *(Frustrated.)* It's not supposed to be funny!

ZACK: "Why, what an ass am I!"

QUINCE: Watch that language, young man!

SARAH: Hamlet has a really bad word coming up here in a second.

BEN: This ought to be fun!

SARAH: NO! Let's cough at the same time so Mrs. Quince doesn't hear it. *(SARAH does a count.)* One.

ZACK: "That I, the son of a dear father murdered ..."

SARAH: Two.

ZACK: "Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, much like
... a ..."

SARAH: Three!

(ALL of the SR actors cough at once, causing ZACK to stop and look SR.)

ALL: EXCUSE ME! *(ZACK does a double take and continues.)*

ZACK: "The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience
of the King."

DREW: May I please do the big soliloquy? This will probably be
my only chance. Mrs. Quince is going to close us down after
tonight.

DUNCAN: *(Frustrated.)* Why not? Someone tell Zack we're
changing Hamlets.

SARAH: How do we do that?

BEN: You could write it on a cue card, but he'd never be able to
read it.

DREW: I'll tell him! *(Crosses to ZACK.)*

ZACK: "To be, or not to be: that is the question!"

(DREW and ZACK try to upstage one another.)

DREW / ZACK: "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The
slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, / Or to take arms
against a sea of troubles, *(THEY begin to shove each other,
without missing a beat of the soliloquy.)* And by opposing, end
them. To die, to sleep – / No more – and by a sleep to say we
end. / The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks.
*(THEY become more forceful, trying to drag each other
offstage.)* That flesh is heir to! 'Tis a consummation. /
DEVOUTLY TO BE WISHED. TO DIE – / TO SLEEP –
PERCHANCE TO DREAM!"

(DREW puts his hand over ZACK'S mouth and continues.)

DREW: "FOR IN THAT SLEEP OF DEATH WHAT DREAMS
MAY COME / WHEN WE HAVE SHUFFLED OFF THIS
MORTAL COIL!"

(DREW screams in pain and pulls away his hand.)

DREW: HE BIT ME! *(HE nurses his hand.)*

ZACK: *(Calmly.)* "May give us pause. There's the respect ..."

(DREW tackles ZACK to the floor and sits on his chest. He reaches down and chokes Zack.)

DREW: *(Calmly.)* "That makes calamity of so long life."

(ZACK pushes DREW off and they began to wrestle on the floor. BEN and JOSH cross to Zack and Ben and try to pull them apart. QUINCE crosses to the fight.)

QUINCE: No fighting on school grounds! I'm calling campus security and you'll both be suspended!

JOSH: Uh ... it's part of the play, Mrs. Quince.

QUINCE: Part of the play? Oh. Is this one of those comedy things? *(Looks at the audience embarrassed.)* Sorry. I thought it was a REAL fight. Not that we have a lot of real fights at Stratford High School.

(JOSH and BEN drag ZACK and DREW to DUNCAN.)

DUNCAN: What on earth got into you two?

DREW: I was supposed to take over as Hamlet!

ZACK: No one takes over my Hamlet!

QUINCE: *(To audience.)* Now might be a good time to review our safety rules for our fire drills.

DUNCAN: Someone get her off the stage!

SARAH: *(Crosses to QUINCE.)* Excuse me, Mrs. Quince. We need the stage for the play.

QUINCE: You mean you haven't finished? Oh. Silly me. *(SHE crosses to DUNCAN.)*

SARAH: *(To audience.)* We'll finish Act III now. "The king rises ..." *(Pause.)* I said "The king rises ..." If Hamlet was here he would say something and then Gertrude would say "How fares my lord?"

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(KATHY hobbles SL.)

KATHY: "How fares my lord?"

(BEN quickly crosses to KATHY.)

BEN: Lights, lights, lights!

SARAH: And then we exit.

(KATHY and BEN cross to DUNCAN. Kathy sits in the chair.)

SARAH: *(Continued.)* And that leaves Hamlet and Horatio.
(SHE crosses to DUNCAN. Nothing happens so she crosses SL and addresses the audience.) And Hamlet would say something.

(DREW rushes onstage.)

DREW: "Why, let the stinking drear go beep ..." I mean ... /
Why, let the stricken deer go weep. / The hart ungallèd play."

(ZACK quickly ENTERS and they speak the lines together with great drama. He tries to upstage DREW, who manages to remain in front of Zack.)

DREW / ZACK: "For some must watch, while some must sleep; /
Thus runs the world away!" *(On the word "away" DREW slings out his arms in a desperate attempt to upstage ZACK. His hand strikes Zack's nose.)*

DREW / ZACK: *(To each OTHER.)* SHUT UP! *(ZACK grabs his nose.)*

ZACK: My nose is bleeding!

(HE quickly EXITS SL. SARAH crosses SR.)

DREW: I didn't mean to hit him.

SARAH: Don't worry about it. He can file assault charges later.

DREW: I'd better go check on him. I'm really sorry. (*HE EXITS SL.*) Zack? I'm sorry!

SARAH: (*To audience.*) Now Rosencrantz and Guildenstern enter.

(*SHE crosses to DUNCAN. ASHLEY drags WILL SL.*)

ASHLEY: "My lord, a word with you ..."

WILL: "Farewell!"

ASHLEY: Not yet.

SARAH: We need a Hamlet, Miss Duncan.

BEN: I'll be Hamlet!

DREW: (*Offstage.*) No, you won't!

DUNCAN: Drew, go out there and be Hamlet! Don't worry about Zack.

(*DREW ENTERS, sticks his tongue out at BEN, and crosses to ASHLEY and WILL.*)

DREW: (*Pompous.*) "Sir, a whole history ..."

DUNCAN: (*To BEN.*) Polonius is about to be cued.

BEN: Does it really matter?

JOSH: (*Delighted.*) This is great! All my relatives are laughing and cheering.

KELLY: I should have done a clown face on everybody.

DREW: "Bless you, sir ..."

(*BEN crosses SL.*)

BEN: "My lord, the Queen would speak with you ..." (*Begins to crack up and can't control HIMSELF.*)

DREW: "Then I will come to my mother." What is wrong with you?

BEN: I can't believe you got in a fight on stage, with a guy in bloomers, over a role in a play.

DREW: (*Hisses.*) It's "Hamlet"!

BEN: You know, I'm glad I'm not Hamlet. (*HE crosses to DUNCAN, giggling.*)

DUNCAN: What is wrong with you? Get back out there and finish that scene!

BEN: *(Sarcastic.)* I'm afraid Drew will give me a bloody nose!

(OTHERS laugh. DUNCAN shoves BEN SL.)

DREW: "Tis now the very witching time of night. / When churchyards yawn and hell itself breaths out. / Contagion to this world."

(BEN and DREW look at each other.)

DREW: Why are you out here? I'm supposed to be alone.

BEN: Fine. *(HE crosses back to DUNCAN.)*

DREW: *(To ASHLEY and WILL.)* All alone. As in no one around.

(ASHLEY drags WILL SR to DUNCAN.)

BEN: You know, I'll just have to turn around and go back out there when he finishes.

(DREW EXITS SL.)

DUNCAN: You're up, Will. Do you remember your speech?

WILL: How does it go again?

(DUNCAN pushes ASHLEY and WILL SL.)

ASHLEY: "The single and peculiar life ..."

WILL: "The single and peculiar life ..." *(Looks to ASHLEY for help.)*

ASHLEY: It's your speech. I don't know it.

WILL: *(Thinks and struggles.)* Uh ... Farewell!

BEN: That was quick.

DUNCAN: His only speech in the whole play and he can't remember it!

(ASHLEY and WILL cross to DUNCAN.)

DUNCAN: *(Continued.)* I can't stand it! I should call it off.

KELLY: But everybody's having such a good time, except for Drew. Which is making everybody else have an ever greater time.

DUNCAN: If I call it off, we'll lose the grant money.

KELLY: We'll probably lose it anyway.

DUNCAN: I wrote a grant proposal for "Hamlet." I don't know what this is, but it ISN'T "Hamlet"! I'm going to call it off.

DREW: No! Not until I do the "Poor Yorick" speech. Please, Miss Duncan! This will probably be my only chance to do it!

DUNCAN: Why not? Kelly, where is our skull?

KELLY: Jim has it.

DUNCAN: Why would Jim have it?

KELLY: It belongs to his father. I don't think he knew Jim was borrowing it.

DUNCAN: I thought it was one of our props.

KELLY: No, ma'am. It's a real skull. Jim's father is a pathologist.

OTHERS: OOO! GROSS!

DREW: You mean I was holding a real human skull? *(HE looks at his hand in horror.)*

KELLY: It wasn't really Yorick. But it was somebody. Jim said his father called him Bruno. He'd be really mad if he knew Jim was sneaking it out of the house.

DUNCAN: Can you find something else for Yorick's skull?

KELLY: I have just the prop. *(SHE quickly EXITS SR.)*

DUNCAN: You're up, Drew.

(DREW crosses SL and strikes a regal pose.)

DREW: "Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio ..."

(KELLY ENTERS and quickly crosses to DREW. He holds out his hand and she gives him a Frankenstein mask. Drew stares at it in disbelief.)

DREW: *(Continued.)* "A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy." *(HE drops the mask, faces the audience and tries to continue.)* "He hath borne me on his back a thousand times."

(In the audience, BARRYMORE stands, shakes his head, and walks out, visible to all.)

DREW: Dr. Barrymore? Is that you? You're not supposed to be here! Wait! This is a mistake! I can explain everything! *(HE runs after BARRYMORE. They both leave the theater. OTHERS stare in disbelief.)* DR. BARRYMORE! WAIT! PLEASE!

BEN: I changed my mind. I want to be Hamlet.

SARAH: Me, too.

BEN: Girls can't be Hamlet!

SARAH: Can too!

BEN: Can not!

SARAH: Can too!

DUNCAN: I give up. I'm going to sit on the floor and cry. Then I'm going to resign. *(SHE sits on the floor with her head down.)*

OTHERS: NO!

BEN: You can be Hamlet, Sarah.

SARAH: We can both be Hamlet. *(THEY take a script and cross SL.)* Hamlet has a lot of lines in Act V. Why don't we start each of the speeches.

BEN: No one will know what's going on.

JOSH: No one knows anyway.

BEN: *(To KATHY.)* You want to be Gertrude and come hobble on stage and die?

KATHY: I feel like I died a long time ago. Miss Duncan, my ankle really hurts. Can I go to the hospital now?

WILL: I'll be Gertrude.

ASHLEY: I'll be Horatio.

KELLY: We never did the crowd scene. I'll come out and watch.

OTHERS: Me, too. *(THEY cross SL. KATHY drags the chair and sits.)*

KATHY: I'll be Gertrude, too. I can go to the hospital later.

SARAH: *(Reading from script.)* "Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting that would not let me sleep." *(SHE passes the script to BEN.)*

BEN: *(Reads, falsetto voice.)* "I will, my lord: I pray you pardon me." *(HE passes the script to WILL.)*

WILL: *(Looks through the script.)* Farewell! *(Hands the script to ASHLEY.)*

ASHLEY: *(Reads.)* "What kind of king is this?" *(Hands the script to JOSH.)*

JOSH: *(Reads.)* "I thank your lordship, it is very hot." *(Hands the script to KELLY.)*

KELLY: *(Reads.)* "I beseech you remember." *(Hands the script to KATHY.)*

KATHY: *(Reads.)* "The king and queen and all are coming down." *(Hands the script to SARAH.)*

SARAH: *(Reads.)* "Gertrude, do not drink!" *(Hands the script to BEN.)*

BEN: *(Reads, falsetto voice.)* "O my dear Hamlet! The drink! The drink! I am poisoned!" *(Hands the script to WILL, and falls down, as if dying.)*

WILL: *(Reads.)* "Vermin, do thy work!" *(Hands the script to ASHLEY.)*

ASHLEY: That's venom, not vermin.

WILL: Whatever.

ASHLEY: *(Looks at script.)* Let's see. *(Reads.)* "It is a poison tempered by himself." *(Hands script to JOSH.)*

JOSH: *(Reads.)* "Exchange forgiveness with me, Hamlet." *(Hands script to KELLY.)*

KELLY: *(Reads.)* "Mine and my father's death come not upon thee, nor thine on me!" *(Hands script to BEN, lying on the floor.)*

BEN: I'm dead already. *(SHE hands the script to SARAH.)*

SARAH: *(Reads.)* "Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee. / I am dead, Horatio. Wretched Queen, adieu! / Give me the cup"

(KELLY EXITS and quickly returns with a cup from a fast food restaurant.)

SARAH: *(Continued.)* "O, I die, Horatio! / The potent poison quite overpowers my spirit." *(SARAH falls down, as if dead.)*

(ALL look at SARAH and at BEN. WILL steps forward and delivers the following without the script.)

WILL: "Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest." *(Looks at audience.)* Farewell!

(HE crosses to DUNCAN. One by one the OTHERS EXIT. Lastly, BEN and SARAH stand up. Ben looks at the audience.)

BEN: That's all, folks.

(HE and SARAH cross to DUNCAN. DREW ENTERS the theater and walks down the aisle. He joins the others onstage.)

DREW: I begged and pleaded. I got on my knees and cried. I promised to wash his car and walk his dog for a year. BUT I am no longer being considered for admission to the Arts Conservatory.

BEN: I'm really sorry, Drew. I mean, we don't like you or anything, but we didn't want to ruin your life.

SARAH: Not too much, anyway.

DREW: I guess that's it. No Arts Conservatory for me. You know, I feel better. For three years I've put all my hopes and dreams in acceptance to the Arts Conservatory. What if I WAS accepted? Would I end up performing "Hamlet" in front of a bunch of people with picnic baskets full of fried chicken and deviled eggs? Would I end up making pizzas and smelling like a garlic factory?

(ZACK ENTERS holding a handkerchief to his nose.)

ZACK: That's what everyone I know who graduated from the Arts Conservatory does.

BEN: So, you're saying all of Drew's hopes and dreams are a complete waste of time?

ZACK: Of course not. Every now and then, I get to do "Hamlet" for an audience that really cares. And it's the best feeling in the world. It makes up for the parks and the pizzas and the bloody noses.

DREW: I'm really sorry about your nose. I got kind of carried away.

ZACK: Getting carried away is what it's all about.

(DREW starts to hug ZACK.)

DREW: Gosh. Thanks, Zack.

ZACK: DON'T TOUCH ME! *(DREW backs away.)* If you break my fingers I won't be able to toss the pizzas.

(QUINCE ENTERS.)

QUINCE: Well, Miss Duncan. I had my doubts. I had my doubts all the way to the end. I still have no idea what was going on, but the audience loves it!

KATHY: Oh. Mrs. Quince! It's you! How are you, Mrs. Quince? Did I ever tell you how much you remind me of my grandmother? I mean, she's really old, too.

QUINCE: *(Ignoring KATHY.)* Those state arts council people said they'd never seen anything like it. The other English teachers are raving about it. They say their students can't wait to read "Hamlet." I might even read it myself. Who wrote it?

SARAH: Uh ... Shakespeare.

QUINCE: So, it's really old, isn't it? I wonder if our library has a copy? *(To KATHY.)* I'll see you in my office Monday morning, young lady! Your grandmother! *(SHE EXITS.)*

JOSH: This is even better than last year.

ASHLEY: And I really loved "Barefoot in the Dark."

BEN / SARAH: "Barefoot in the PARK."

KATHY: Can we do another Shakespeare next year?

KELLY: I saw he wrote a play called "Othello." It sounds kind of cool.

DREW: Oh! I would love to be Othello!

SARAH: You won't be here. You're going to graduate. Remember?

DREW: I'll come back. I wanna be Othello! Please?

BEN: I wanna be Othello!

SARAH: Hey! I wanna be Othello!

BEN: Girls can't be Othello!

SARAH: Can so!

DREW / BEN / JOSH: CANNOT!

SARAH / ASHLEY / KATHY: CAN TOO!
DREW / BEN / JOSH: CANNOT!
SARAH / ASHLEY / KATHY: CAN TOO!
SARAH: Can girls be Othello, Miss Duncan?

(DUNCAN sits on the floor with her head on her knees.)

KELLY: How about if all the characters in "Othello" have smiley faces painted on their foreheads?
WILL: And Othello lives in this New York apartment with a lot of zany neighbors.
ZACK: You know, I might come back and help out. I've never done "Othello."
SARAH: You've never done Horatio, either.
ASHLEY: You know, I could really go for a pizza.
OTHERS: Me, too.
ZACK: How about the Pizza Palace?
JOSH: The crust is too thick.
KELLY: And it takes forever to get your order.
ASHLEY: And they never use enough pepperoni.
ZACK: *(Frustrated.)* How about if the pizzas are free?
ALL: OKAY!

(ALL but DUNCAN and WILL EXIT.)

WILL: Miss Duncan? Aren't you coming to the cast party?
DUNCAN: I don't think so, Will.
WILL: Hey! "Hamlet" is a success! Come on, Miss Duncan. You deserve a pizza. *(HE helps HER to her feet.)* See, Miss Duncan? *(To audience.)* All's well that ends well! *(THEY EXIT.)*

(Curtain falls.)

END OF PLAY