

OSRIC. Horatio, stop it! Where are you taking me!

HORATIO. Quiet.

OSRIC. I won't be quiet! You're hurting me! Horatio — !
(*Managing to pull away.*) Put me back in my cell.

HORATIO. No.

OSRIC. I demand it!

HORATIO. I'm trying to save your life!

OSRIC. Why?

HORATIO. *Why!?*

OSRIC. It's none of your business. Besides, you don't even like me.

HORATIO. I need you! We're the only ones who know the truth. Do you want to hang? (*Osric is silent. Horatio pushes him along again. Osric resists.*)

OSRIC. Where is it we're going?

HORATIO. I'm getting you out of the castle. (*Osric is stunned.*)

OSRIC. Out of the — ? Out of — ?!

HORATIO. What's wrong?

OSRIC. I've never ... I've never ...

HORATIO. What?

OSRIC. *Been* out of the castle. (*Now Horatio is stunned.*)

HORATIO. Never?

OSRIC. There was no need. Everything I wanted was right here. Out there it was all just ... Denmark.

HORATIO. (*Pushing him again.*) You'll get used to it.

OSRIC. No, no, no, no, no — Horatio — please! Just stop! Stop for a minute and *listen to me!* (*Horatio stops.*) I want to hang.

HORATIO. What?

OSRIC. That's overstated. But I would rather hang than have to go out into ... whatever that is. I've seen it from the ramparts, Horatio. No one looks happy out there. No one's well dressed —

HORATIO. (*Pushing him yet again.*) Come on.

OSRIC. *I'm a Polish spy!! Listen, everyone! I'm a 'spy! I really am!!*

HORATIO. Shut up.

OSRIC. *Long live Poland!*

HORATIO. (*Clapping a hand over Osric's mouth.*) You're insane! Everyone in this castle is. (*Osric nods.*) How can you accept it? You've been falsely accused. Even you must feel some outrage.

OSRIC. Outrage is a luxury best enjoyed by those who can do something about it. I must simply be patient and wait for the storm to pass over me.

HORATIO. Or swallow you whole.

OSRIC. No system's perfect. May I please go back to my cell now?

HORATIO. All right. Till I can think of another way. But don't blame me if you're hanged in the meantime. Fair enough?

OSRIC. You are good to me, Horatio.

HORATIO. I'm just trying to do one honest thing.

OSRIC. We all have our faults. (*Horatio pushes Osric off the way they came. Lights fade to black.*)

Scene 2

Lights slowly come up on the Queen's chambers. As they do, we hear the following, which starts in darkness.

CLAUDIUS. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below —

HAMLET. Kill him!

CLAUDIUS. My words fly up —

HAMLET. Kill him! Kill him now!

CLAUDIUS. My words —

HAMLET. *What are you waiting for? (By now lights are up. They reveal Claudius kneeling at his prayer bench. Laertes stands behind him with a drawn dagger. In the foreground Gertrude lies on the now-familiar tapestry, in an awkward — if alluring — posture. U., surveying all this, is Hamlet — or Hamlet's eye, rather — since he's still in the tv.)*

LAERTES. I — I can't.