

that.

OPHELIA. (*Exasperatedly, to Polonius.*) Oh, please.

OSRIC. (*Holding up the chalice.*) Chalice?

FORTINBRAS. Moat.

OSRIC. Prayer bench?

FORTINBRAS. Moat.

CLAUDIUS. Moat?

OPHELIA. (*As these are thrown in.*) Why not toss it all in the moat?

FORTINBRAS. I intend to.

OPHELIA. And just how do you plan to revenge yourself on the living, if you leave them no reminders?

FORTINBRAS. I don't.

OPHELIA. But you were murdered.

FORTINBRAS. Not everything can work out. Oh, and thanks, everyone, for that great warning about my imminent death.

LAERTES. We gave you hints.

FORTINBRAS. Hints? "Rest well, Fortinbras"? It was bedtime! (*Looking through his telescope again.*) Why don't I know where my army is? (*Horatio enters with a parchment.*)

HORATIO. I know where it is.

FORTINBRAS. You do? Excellent. Where?

HORATIO. (*Unrolling the parchment, reading.*) "A Summary of the Latest Events. The combined Danish-Norwegian-Polish-Carpathian-Transylvanian-Anatolian-Trans Caucasian-Persian-Afghan and Baluchistani forces under the supreme command of Fortinbras have reached the banks of the Indus River."

FORTINBRAS. So that's where they are.

HORATIO. "There they stood for a long time, staring across into that profound and endless universe of mysteries known as India."

FORTINBRAS. I distinctly told them to turn around.

HORATIO. "Poised for the final, inevitable conquest this proud array of forces, such as the world has never seen — the army of Fortinbras — "

OPHELIA. Get to the point.

HORATIO. "Laid down their arms — "

FORTINBRAS. And started home?

HORATIO. "And walked into the roiling Indus River, and drowned."

FORTINBRAS. Drowned?

HORATIO. To a man.

FORTINBRAS. To a man? (*Horatio nods, reads on.*)

HORATIO. There's one more item. "Horatio, having failed one prince and murdered another, today took his own life, in the Roman fashion. He can now — at last — be counted in the ranks of the dead. A distinction he holds in common with practically everyone he knew. Certainly everyone he cared about." (*Horatio looks first at Hamlet, then at Fortinbras, then reads on.*) "No one can fully explain the recent spate of untimely death within the walls of Elsinore — a seat of power and enlightenment once widely envied. Some have put forth the theory that death somehow became the fashion at court for a short time. Others think that a spiral of revenge more vicious and personal than ever before seen reigned here briefly. Still others think that the dead, having discovered that there is no final judgment, and sensing that they would soon dissipate into nothingness, forever — occupied themselves with the torture of the living. This manner of amusement sufficed only until so many had died that there was, in fact, no one worth taking revenge on any longer." (*Horatio rolls up the parchment, hands it to Osric.*) For the moat. (*Gently taking the telescope from Fortinbras.*) This too. (*Looking out over the battlement.*) When I first rode toward Elsinore, I thought, "What magnificence. How bright the future must be, if men have progressed so far as to build this." (*Horatio exits.*)

FORTINBRAS. (*To Polonius.*) Was Horatio right about the army? (*Polonius starts to answer, decides against it, touches Fortinbras gently on the cheek, exits. To Hamlet.*) Was he? (*Ophelia moves to Fortinbras.*)

OPHELIA. Why should you care? You're dead.

FORTINBRAS. I was responsible. My whole army.

OPHELIA. Oh, lighten up. Just means they'll get back here that much faster. Place is really going to be crowded.

FORTINBRAS. We're going to disappear forever.