

dead, and I'm free of you! From this moment on! You hear me? Free! *(Fortinbras storms out, with Laertes following.)*

LAERTES. You want to kick a ball around?

FORTINBRAS. NO!! *(Fortinbras and Laertes are gone.)*

HORATIO. *(Looking around, puzzled.)* Carpathia? Who else does he see? *(To the tv.)* I'm sorry, m'lord — he's gone.

HAMLET. You've done well. Leave me now.

HORATIO. Leave you?

HAMLET. Go! *(Horatio hurries out.)*

OPHELIA. So. You found your way back.

HAMLET. Is Claudius here?

OPHELIA. Yeah, he didn't have any trouble. Funny, eh? Looks like you're in a fix.

HAMLET. I want to be back. Among you.

OPHELIA. So? Get out of the box.

HAMLET. I don't know how! Please — I have so much to do.

OPHELIA. Don't worry. I'm doing it for you. Fortinbras is completely under my control.

HAMLET. He's not telling the truth!

OPHELIA. He's been busy. Conquering Poland.

HAMLET. Help me!

OPHELIA. Do I look like I have a manual? I don't know how to help you. What's this? "On/off"?

HAMLET. *Don't touch that! Free me, Ophelia!*

OPHELIA. Why should I?

HAM. FORTINBRAS. *Free me now, as you love me! Ophelia — !! (Ophelia turns off the set.)*

OPHELIA. Dream on. *(She starts out, stops.)* God, that felt good. *(Ophelia exits. Lights fade slowly to black. Just as they reach black, the tv turns on again, by itself. We see the brooding eye of Hamlet. Then darkness.)*

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene 1

A castle hall. Polonius appears. He carries with him the Queen's old tapestry. He stops, looks around to make sure no one's there. Satisfied, he spreads out the tapestry, finds the hole made by Hamlet's sword.

POLONIUS. *(Touching it.)* Here. *(Touching his chest.)* Here. *(To the audience.)* It does something to a man's point of view when he suddenly feels a sword go through his heart. I was pinned like a bug against the wall. Where was all my good advice then? Stuck in my throat, where it's remained ever since. Oh, I still have plenty of advice, don't misunderstand. I could tell everybody in this castle, living and dead, what to do. But to hell with 'em, that's what I say. *(Sighing.)* If there were a hell. There doesn't seem to be, for me. No heaven either, that I've been able to discern. Only this — wandering around the scene of all my errors, watching everyone make the same old mistakes, *burning* to advise them — and hating myself for it. Death has been my greatest disappointment. It's too much like life. I thought there would be a great adventure, but there's no great adventure. I've asked the King, the Queen, the others — no one's had a great adventure. So far, there's been nothing to compare with that first moment, pinned against a wall, translated by a steel point — my face buried against the blank side of a tapestry — hoping that in a single instant all might finally be revealed. *(Tossing over the corner of the tapestry.)* What a hoax. Death has all the uncertainty of life, and twice the solitude. If you take my advice — and no one ever does — you'll avoid it. *(Polonius turns to go. As he does, Fortinbras steps into view. Polonius freezes.)*

FORTINBRAS. You spoke! *(Polonius turns and hurries toward another exit. Fortinbras moves to block his way.)* No, you don't! Talk to me — now! *(Polonius tries another direction. Fortinbras*