

Hamlet: Prince of Pork

Or

My Uncle's a Pig

By

Gene Kato

A Comedy in Iambic

Pigtameter

Hamlet, Prince of Pork

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Cast of Characters

Hamlet
King Cloven
Queen Soward
Porkloinius
Westphalia
Hockley
Boaratio
Boarnardo
Frankfurter
Rosensnout
Baconstern
Cornsquealius
Porkinsauce
Dancing Pork Chop
First Player
Wolf King
Wolf Queen
Mole 1
Mole 2
Rooster
Bob
Luke
Singing Wolf
Wolf Players

ACT 1: PRINCE OF PORK

THE SCENE: *A guard platform at the castle, Shishkabob. Two pig guards, BOARNARDO and FRANKFURTER are on watch. They look very anxious. As they pass one another, they are startled by a shadow.*

FRANKFURTER. Boarnardo! A shadow! Who goes there?

BOARATIO. *(Entering)* Will you two stop it! I told you I was going to be coming up here tonight.

BOARNARDO. We're sorry, Boaratio.

FRANKFURTER. I'm embarrassed.

BOARATIO. You should be. A pig your age.

FRANKFURTER. It's the ghost!

BOARNARDO. We thought you were the ghost of the former King.

BOARATIO. You're joking.

BOARNARDO. Oh, I don't joke.

FRANKFURTER. He's a serious swine. Superstitious, but, serious.

BOARATIO. Are you saying that you've seen the ghost of King Omelet?

BOARNARDO. Yep.

FRANKFURTER. Uh-huh.

BOARATIO. Well, how did he look?

FRANKFURTER. Dead.

BOARNARDO. Like a big pork chop.

FRANKFURTER. With a bite out of him.

BOARATIO. That's a shame. How many times have you seen him? Once? Twice?

FRANKFURTER. Twice. It's eerie.

BOARATIO. What does he do? Does he say anything?

FRANKFURTER. Nope. He just floats.

BOARATIO. Pork floats?

BOARNARDO. Who knew? I heard him say something.

BOARATIO. You did?

FRANKFURTER. You didn't tell me that.

BOARNARDO. I didn't really understand it. He was mumbling something like "Shake and Bake" or something like that.

BOARATIO. The King said "Shake and Bake"?

BOARNARDO. Or something *like* that. All I know is when a huge floating pork chop talks, you don't really question it.

FRANKFURTER. Maybe he was talking in code.

BOARATIO. Like Pig Latin?

FRANKFURTER. No, maybe he was just trying to signal us, you know? Give us a hint about why he was here. See what I mean?

BOARATIO. You're saying maybe he was just using "Shake and Bake" as a cover?

FRANKFURTER. Exactly! (*A huge PORK CHOP enters.*)

BOARNARDO. Look, there he is!

BOARATIO. Come on!

FRANKFURTER. Come on what?

BOARATIO. We need to get a closer look!

BOARNARDO. Are you outta your cotton pickin' mind?!

BOARATIO. Well, what else do you suggest we do?

BOARNARDO. Run wee wee wee all the way home.

BOARATIO. I can't do this alone!

FRANKFURTER. Why do you need us? What's a big chop gonna do?

BOARATIO. Leave if we don't hurry! Come on! Chop chop!

FRANKFURTER. I really can't help you, Boaratio. I'd like to, but I can't.

BOARATIO. Why not?!

FRANKFURTER. Because, I'm a coward.

BOARATIO. If you're so afraid, then why did you take a job on the castle watch?

FRANKFURTER. It had a good dental plan.

BOARNARDO. You know, in this light, it sort of looks like King Omelet. (*Pause. Silence.*) Well, from the side, I think.

BOARATIO. I'm going to try to talk to him.

FRANKFURTER. I wouldn't if I were you, Boaratio. Talking to the dead is a nasty business. I should know. My family does it all of the time.

BOARATIO. Then why aren't you trying to contact the King?

FRANKFURTER. More of that coward thing I was telling you about. It rules my life. I don't date because of it.

BOARATIO. Well, I'm going to try. (*To PORK CHOP*) Hey! You! Floating chop! Are you what's left of King Omelet?

PORK CHOP. Shake and Bake! Shake and Bake!

BOARNARDO. Is it just me, or does the King look like he's lost a little weight?

FRANKFURTER. It is offended!

BOARATIO. Where are you going? He's leaving! Wait! *(The PORK CHOP runs off.)* He's gone.

BOARNARDO. Did you see how fast he hauled it out of here?

FRANKFURTER. Yeah. Didn't stand on ceremony, did he?

BOARNARDO. He didn't stand on anything. He floated.

FRANKFURTER. Did he leave any batter behind?

BOARNARDO. That's sick.

FRANKFURTER. Well, I'm hungry.

BOARNARDO. So you want to eat batter from the carcass of the dead King?

FRANKFURTER. I was just asking.

BOARNARDO. Pig! Wants to eat the King! What a weirdo!

BOARATIO. That's enough. We need to figure out what to do.

BOARNARDO. Don't ask dumbbell over here. He'll want to break out a nice white wine! *(The PORK CHOP tap dances on.)*

BOARATIO. He's back!

BOARNARDO. What's he doing? Some sort of code?

FRANKFURTER. Looks like a time step to me. *(A rooster crows. The PORK CHOP taps off.)*

BOARATIO. He's gone.

BOARNARDO. He was about to speak when the rooster crowed.

BOARATIO. Morning is coming. I have to find Hamlet and inform him of what we've seen. If I bring him here, will the two of you tell him what you've seen as well?

FRANKFURTER. Okay, as long as I don't have to do anything dangerous afterward. Remember about my condition.

BOARATIO. Fine. Boarnardo?

BOARNARDO. I'll back you up.

BOARATIO. Good. I'll see you later. I think I know where to find Prince Hamlet. Until then. *(BOARATIO exits. BOARNARDO and FRANKFURTER continue the watch. Lights fade to black. The scene changes to the audience chamber inside Shishkabob. KING CLOVEN,*

QUEEN SOWARD, PORKLOINIUS, his son HOCKLEY, HAMLET, and others. KING CLOVEN speaks.)

KING. I wish to extend my most sincere thanks to everyone who has been so supportive since my brother's tragic death. The entire kingdom has shown it can pull together and be one in this time of grief. Everyone has needed a shoulder (and given a shoulder) to cry on and it makes us proud to live in Pork. We have seen that it's better for everyone to be upset than just us. *(Pause. Everyone looks around . . .confused.)* Many were shocked by Omelets' death, that is true. However, no one should fear for his or her safety because I have performed my duty and married my brother's wife. (I always thought she was a honey) We are still under rule from the royal house of Pork and no threat to kith, kin, King, or country shall arise. Pork remains ours and no one shall cut into Pork, except by us! As long as castle Shishkabob stands . . .so do we!

(Silence. Two or three people start a slow applause which gradually grows slightly bigger. . .yet, still has the confused quality to it. At the back of the crowd one pig shouts "Hooray". A few turn to look, but very little attention is drawn.) Okay, now to the business at hand. I understand that Porkinsauce is trying to run us amuck . . .is that right? *(Silence)* Does anyone know about this? *(Silence)* Anyone have even the slightest clue? No?

PORKLOINIUS. Your Majesty? I believe everyone is confused by the term "run amuck".

KING. Attack! Plunder! Porkinsauce wants to steal back what we took from his father. Isn't that right, Cornsquealius? *(CORNSEQUALIUS and BOB step forward.)*

CORNSEQUALIUS. Yes, sir! They are indeed going to attack.

KING. Okay, what ya' gonna do about it?

CORNSEQUALIUS. That's why we're here, Your Majesty. We were hoping you could tell us.

KING. Bob? Do you still do magic?

BOB. Yes, Your Majesty.

KING. Would you like to come to work for me as my magical court jester? My last one messed up all of his tricks so I had him killed.

BOB. I'd be dead within the hour.

KING. It was just a thought.

CORNSEQUALIUS. Sire, what should we do about Porkinsauce?

KING. (*Handing them a piece of paper.*) Take this and give it to Boarway, his uncle.

BOB. What is it?

KING. A note telling him to make his nephew knock it off. It's been checked for spelling and grammar, already. Give it to good Boarway and tell him that if I get my way, then I wish him well. If not, then he can drop dead. Now, go. (*CORNSQEALIUS and BOB exit. As they leave, BOB drops cards, linking rings, scarves, etc*) Now, Hockley, what can I do for you? I'll give you anything but money. I can't abide people who rest on their laurels and expect handouts. I'm the King . . .not a bank, treasury, or savings and loan.

HOCKLEY. I just want to go back to France.

KING. That's it?

HOCKLEY. Yes, Sire.

KING. Studying Pig Latin, are you?

HOCKLEY. No. I'm learning to be a coward and I wish to cover myself in cheese and change my name to Cordon Bleu.

KING. You're a sick young man, Hockley. Kinda twisted and a little on the weird side, but I like you. Does your father approve of this pilgrimage?

PORKLOINIUS. I do.

KING. Was I talking to you, Old Man?

PORKLOINIUS. No, Sire.

KING. Then stuff an apple in your mouth. (*Pause*)

PORKLOINIUS. Literally?

KING. Hockley! Hit the road and best of luck.

HOCKLEY. I appreciate that, Your Majesty. I'll go pack. (*HOCKLEY exits.*)

KING. Now, my pig Hamlet who's spirits are crashed . . .

HAMLET. (*Aside*) A little more than pig and a truly crashing Boar.

KING. Why are you still so upset?

HAMLET. Um , . .because my dad is still dead.

KING. Well, if it makes you feel any better . . .so is my brother. Now, what do you want?

HAMLET. I want to return to school.

KING. No.

HAMLET. Why not?

KING. You didn't get any financial aid. Do you think I'm made out of money? I can't afford to send you back to school. I have battles to fund, banquets to pay for . . .not to mention the fact that I still need to have your father properly embalmed. That's expensive.

HAMLET. All that's left of my father is bones, Uncle.

KING. I know! Can you imagine how much money I'm gonna have to spend on bailing wire, papier-mâché, and fluid? Not to mention the fees for the sculptor to reconstruct your father's likeness! *(Pause)* I'm sorry, Hamlet. But as King I have to look hard at my priorities. Besides, you look so depressed. School isn't the place to grieve. Do it here, but do it quickly. After all, your father lost his father, and his did before him, and his did before him, and so on and so on and so on. Your eyes are so droopy you look like a basset hound.

QUEEN. Hamlet. Please, stay here.

HAMLET. Okey-dokey.

KING. Good. Come, everyone! Drinks are on me! *(All exit but HAMLET.)*

HAMLET. Geez! My uncle's a pig. He breaks across the wind with his declarations of priorities! He thinks I can just let my father's memory die? Yet, something is not right. When he breaks wind I smell foul bacon! And my mother! My father dead only a month and she marries his brother! Are we razorbacks? Do we live that far in the country?

BOARATIO. *(Entering with a box.)* Hamlet, good, you're here.

HAMLET. Where else would I be?

BOARATIO. Well, I thought you might have gone back to school.

HAMLET. No, the old cheapskate won't let me go. He's too busy funding banquets and stuff. *(Pause)* What are you doing here?

BOARATIO. I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET. No, I think you came to see my mother's wedding.

BOARATIO. That's not funny. *(Pause)* But now that you mention it, here's a Cuisanart for your mom. I hope she likes it.

HAMLET. She's not particular, she likes everything. I mean, look at her choice in husband.

BOARATIO. You're really not going back to school?

HAMLET. I can't.

BOARATIO. You could get work somewhere.

HAMLET. I'm a prince, Boaratio. I'm not one to live from paycheck to paycheck.

BOARATIO. Your father would never have allowed you not to finish school.

HAMLET. My mother jumped into this marriage, Boaratio. We ate the same coleslaw at the wedding that we ate at the funeral. It makes me sick.

BOARATIO. You miss the former King?

HAMLET. Well, yes, of course. But I mean the coleslaw makes me sick. I think it's the cabbage.

BOARATIO. I think I saw your father.

HAMLET. What?

BOARATIO. Last night.

HAMLET. Where?

BOARATIO. On the watch tower.

HAMLET. Someone dug him up?

BOARATIO. No, I mean I thought I saw his ghost.

HAMLET. You're joking.

BOARATIO. No, I don't joke.

HAMLET. Did he say anything?

BOARATIO. I thought I heard him say, "Shake and Bake".

HAMLET. That's not funny.

BOARATIO. It wasn't meant to be.

HAMLET. Why would he say "Shake and Bake"? It doesn't make any sense.

BOARATIO. We think he was covering for something else.

HAMLET. What . . .? We? Who else was with you?

BOARATIO. Boarnardo and Frankfurter. We think he wants to tell you something.

HAMLET. Me? A message? How can you tell?

BOARATIO. Well, he wouldn't talk at first. Then, he started to tap out a message but a crowing rooster cut him off.

HAMLET. Can you show me where he was?

BOARATIO. That's why I'm here. We think if you come to the watch tower tonight, then he may speak.

HAMLET. How does he look?

BOARATIO. Pale, dead, like a giant pork chop with a bite out of it.

HAMLET. I take it that death hasn't really flattered him.

BOARATIO. Well, let's just say that I hope he isn't planning any dates soon.

HAMLET. Okay, I'll meet you here in a few hours and we'll go to the watch tower and cast upon him my own eyes.

BOARATIO. Oh, the horror! The same thing happened to Oediporks Rex! (*HAMLET stares at BOARATIO*)

HAMLET. No, I mean I'll look upon him with my eyes. Not throw them at him.

BOARATIO. Oh, well in that case . . . I'll see you later then.

HAMLET. Boaratio? Don't say anything to anyone about what you've seen.

BOARATIO. Who am I gonna tell? (*BOARATIO exits. HAMLET is left alone.*)

HAMLET. My father ghost has come to Shishkabob! This has to be a sign! Nothing good can come of this. (*Pause*) I'm gettin' all goosepimply! Oh, well. Nothing I can do until tonight. Then I'll probe this strange chop and see what he has to say. If this is a warning of things to come or some unholy vision from things past, I'll get to the bottom of this! (*HAMLET exits. The scene changes to PORKLOINIUS'S chambers. HOCKLEY and WESTPHALIA enter.*)

HOCKLEY. I don't care if he's a prince. I think you should just be careful.

WESTPHALIA. But he's cute.

HOCKLEY. That may be the case, but . . .

WESTPHALIA. (*Overlapping*) You think Hamlet is cute?

HOCKLEY. That's not what I meant . . .

WESTPHALIA. (*Overlapping*) That's what you implied.

HOCKLEY. Westphalia . . .

WESTPHALIA. (*Overlapping*) Have you been playing Twister with Honeyglaze again?

HOCKLEY. West . . .

WESTPHALIA. (*Overlapping*) Because if you are, then that's okay, I just need to know so I'll stop trying to set you up with Rowena. She's getting a little put out with you, anyway.

HOCKLEY. *WESTPHALIA!* That's not what I meant! I'm just saying that Hamlet is . . . young and fickle.

WESTPHALIA. So are you.

HOCKLEY. Exactly! That's why I'm kind of an expert on this subject! If you want to date the prince, then fine, but I wouldn't get my hopes up for marriage . . .that's just the way princes are. It goes along with that whole need to . . .conquer. They make countries fall and women fall in love. There's no difference.

WESTPHALIA. I really didn't need you to go there. I get the point. But what about what I want?

HOCKLEY. Who cares? You're a woman!

WESTPHALIA. Ohhh! You men can be such pigs sometimes!

HOCKLEY. We're pigs all the time. See the nose?

PORKLOINIUS. *(Entering. To HOCKLEY)* Aren't you gone, yet?

HOCKLEY. I was just leaving.

PORKLOINIUS. Good, because I was thinking about renting out your bedroom. I'm advertising it as "barely used".

HOCKLEY. I'm leaving. *(To WESTPHALIA)* Remember what I told you.

WESTPHALIA. Yeah, I hear you.

HOCKLEY. Goodbye, then. I'll write you as soon as I reach France. *(HOCKLEY exits)*

PORKLOINIUS. What did he tell you?

WESTPHALIA. *(Taking a big breath)* He said that I shouldn't fall in love with Hamlet and I should also be wary of the fact that he said such sweet and kind words to me because Hamlet is a prince and princes have ulterior motives with countries and women.

PORKLOINIUS. Oh, that. *(Pause)* He's right. I forbid you to see him. *(PORKLOINIUS exits)*

WESTPHALIA. But what about what I want?! *(Lights fade and the scene changes to the watch tower. HAMLET, BOARATIO, BOARNARDO, and FRANKFURTER. In the distance, we can barely hear the sounds of a crowd singing "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall")*

HAMLET. This is the place?

BOARNARDO. I think so.

HAMLET. You think so?

BOARNARDO. All watch towers look the same to me.

BOARATIO. This is the place, Hamlet. I'm positive.

HAMLET. Good. Now, tell me where he was. Don't leave anything out.

BOARATIO. Well, we . . . *(He hears the music for the first time)* What is that sound?

HAMLET. My uncle is spending my school money.

BOARATIO. He's throwing a banquet? In honor of what?

HAMLET. My father's death, I guess. Or maybe he's just celebrating being the new King. I never can separate the two. Anyway, it angers me. All of the other nations think of us as drunkards and they constantly soil our titles of honor. How's that for a swinish phrase?

BOARATIO. Right on the mark. *(The PORK CHOP taps on to the tune of "Puttin' on the Ritz". He carries a top hat and cane.)* Look, Hamlet! It's King Omelet! *(The music bursts forth and the CHOP does a terrific tap dance routine. HAMLET falls to his knees.)*

HAMLET. Dad? Is it really you? *(The CHOP dances some more.)*

BOARATIO. Hamlet?

HAMLET. Okay, Dad, I believe you. You can stop showing off. We all see that you can tap dance. Okay, everyone clap for the King so he'll quit. Wasn't he good?

BOARATIO. Hamlet? I think . . .

HAMLET. Dad, I need some answers. I need to know what happened to you. This whole marriage thing with Mom is really kinda weird. You know, people are startin' to talk about us like we have little class. That's hard for a prince like me to stomach, you know? *(The CHOP beckons HAMLET to follow him and starts off.)*

BOARATIO. He wants you to follow him.

HAMLET. Then I must.

BOARNARDO. I don't recommend that, My Board.

HAMLET. Why not?

BOARATIO. It could be some evil spirit in the form of your father.

HAMLET. Boaratio, my father didn't look like that when he was alive.

FRANKFURTER. Good point, Hamlet.

HAMLET. I have to follow it!

BOARATIO. No, you don't. You're part of the Royal Family. They always have choices.

HAMLET. I must! My fate calls me!

BOARATIO. What if it pushes you off a cliff?

HAMLET. You actually think a giant pork chop is gonna lure me to a cliff by performing a tap dance routine and push me off it?

FRANKFURTER. Good point, Hamlet.

BOARATIO. At least, let us come with you.

HAMLET. No, this is a private moment. Look at my father. He obviously wants to have a little personal time with me. You understand? He must want to tell me things that fathers are supposed to tell sons.

(Pause) Boarnardo! Frankfurter! Please go and patrol the south watch!

(They bow and exit. BOARATIO remains.) Please, Boaratio?

BOARATIO. I cannot let you go alone.

HAMLET. I was afraid of that. Boaratio? You're my best friend . . . and I love you like I would were you my own brother. You know that, don't you?

BOARATIO. Absolutely, Hamlet.

HAMLET. Good, then forgive me for this. *(HAMLET punches BOARATIO right square in the snout and he drops to the ground, unconscious. HAMLET picks him up and places him offstage, then returns to tell the PORK CHOP.)* Okay, let's go. *(HAMLET follows the PORK CHOP to the North watch tower. Finally, the CHOP sits down and beckons for HAMLET to do so as well.)*

PORK CHOP. Hi, Son.

HAMLET. Hello.

PORK CHOP. How are you?

HAMLET. I'm fine. I'd ask about you, but I'm afraid of what you'd say.

PORK CHOP. I don't have much time, Son.

HAMLET. What happened? Were you killed? Did you see who did it?

PORK CHOP. Son, please! I can't abide this kind of grilling! Or any kind of grilling, if you take my meaning.

HAMLET. But, Dad . . . !

PORK CHOP. Silence! I need you to listen to me, Hamlet!

HAMLET. Sure.

PORK CHOP. And I also need you to carry out a little revenge for me when I go.

HAMLET. If it will restore honor, then I am bound to it!

PORK CHOP. Well, hold on a second, I haven't told you who it's against. Gosh, you're impatient. Where did you learn impatience from?

HAMLET. You.

PORK CHOP. *(After a pause)* Oh, well, I'm glad to see that you listened to me and I taught you well. I am the ghost of your father . . .

HAMLET. You've already told me that.

PORK CHOP. Shutup. *(Pause)* I am doomed to tap my troubles away until the crime that has brought me to this state has been fully paid in and purged away. *(Pause)* Son, I'm frying in Hell and I really need your help. So, please, don't go soft on me. Okay?

HAMLET. Go on.

PORK CHOP. I was murdered.

HAMLET. Murder?!

PORK CHOP. Yes, murder!

HAMLET. But who?!

PORK CHOP. I was killed by the one person that I thought would never betray me. The one that I shared my life with, walked to school with, stole girlfriends from, and now that person has stolen my life, wife, and crown!

HAMLET. My uncle!

PORK CHOP. Yes, I was clobbered by Cloven!

HAMLET. But how!

PORK CHOP. I'm getting to that! You're doing it again!

HAMLET. Doing what?

PORK CHOP. Acting impatient! I can't stand that! You really need to break that habit, Son. *(Pause)* Anyway, I was walking in the garden and I thought that I would take the time to do what I usually had no time to do. You know, smell the daisies, oink at the sun, sniff out the occasional truffle. Pig stuff. Anyway, I thought that I was getting a little tired so I would take a rest and continue back to the castle. I looked all over the place for a comfortable place to rest my hocks. Finally, I found a soft patch of grass that looked to be comfortable. . .so I decided to lie down. However, shortly after my head hit the ground, I caught the scent of a most foul smell!

HAMLET. My uncle?

PORK CHOP. No. It seems that particular patch of grass had been recently fertilized. So, I got up and found a nice bench and fell asleep. I was having the most pleasant dream . . .

HAMLET. Dad, come on . . .while I'm still young.

PORK CHOP. Alright, fine! Shortly after that I felt a strange substance in my ear. I was awakened and saw the form of my own brother over me.

HAMLET. What was he doing?

PORK CHOP. My son, he was pouring meat tenderizer in my ear! (*HAMLET winces in terror.*) I could feel the foul substance running through my head and on into my body. Making me soft and chewable. By the time the poison had worked its deadly deed, marshmallows were like beef jerky compared to my body. I felt weak and blackness passed over me. The next thing I felt was sharp teeth biting me! My own brother had tenderized me and fed me to the wolves! (*Pause*) And to top it all off . . . he gets my wife to marry him!

HAMLET. Oh, Father! Consider the revenge in progress! I will find a way to make sure the King is thrown into the deepest dungeon and never let out!

PORK CHOP. No, Son. He must be killed as well. He's a crafty one, that brother of mine. He'd find a way to escape and then we'd have a spam on the lam! No, it's an eye for an eye if you ask me!

HAMLET. What about Mother?

PORK CHOP. Leave her to Heaven. (*A ROOSTER enters and jumps up on the wall.*)

ROOSTER. Mornin', Hamlet.

HAMLET. Good morning. (*Pause*) Father, the night has gone by so fast!

PORK CHOP. Yes, I must go. Hamlet, you must kill the King before he has time to ask forgiveness for what he's done. Knock him off while his sins lie heavy on his porky carcass!

HAMLET. I will, Father! I swear it!

PORK CHOP. Just in case you get soft, Hamlet, take a good long look at what has become of me! Remember!

HAMLET. I will. Cloven will pay for what he has done! (*The music starts and the PORK CHOP taps off as the ROOSTER crows.*)

ROOSTER. My throat hurts. I think I slept with my mouth open last night. (*ROOSTER exits as BOARATIO, BOARNARDO, and FRANKFURTER enter.*)

BOARATIO. Hamlet, there you are. We've been looking for you for the past two hours.

HAMLET. I've been here talking to my father.

BOARATIO. How was he?

HAMLET. Dead.

BOARATIO. Did he tell you anything of any importance?

HAMLET. Well, Boaratio, he certainly hasn't been haunting the watch towers trying to make small talk. It would appear that . . .no, I can't tell you.

BOARNARDO. I'm not sure I want to know, anyway.

FRANKFURTER. I know that I don't want to hear.

HAMLET. Nice try, boys, but I'm still not gonna tell you.

BOARATIO. What can you tell us?

HAMLET. We have a swine as a ruler.

BOARATIO. We knew that.

HAMLET. And the ghost was real. It's an honest ghost. Now, I will let you know more in time, but for now I need you to swear that you won't tell a soul what you've seen.

BOARATIO. Okay.

HAMLET. I'm serious. No squealers!

ALL. We swear!

HAMLET. Alright. Now to set to task the master plan! (*HAMLET runs off.*)

BOARATIO. What master plan?! (*ALL exit. The scene changes to the interior of the castle. PORKLOINIUS enters as WESTPHALIA runs in from the opposite direction. She is looking behind her and runs directly into PORKLOINIUS causing both of them to fall to the floor.*)

PORKLOINIUS. Good heavens, Westphalia! What on earth are you running from?

WESTPHALIA. Oh, Daddy! I'm so excited! I was minding my own business in my closet. . .

PORKLOINIUS. What were you doing in your closet?

WESTPHALIA. It's not important. Anyway, all of a sudden there was this . . .this . . .*PERSON* standing before me with his shirt unbuttoned, not wearing a hat, with all messy, poopie stockings, white as a ghost, knees knocking together, and a mass of drool rolling from his mouth!

PORKLOINIUS. My goodness! You want me to call the guards?!

WESTPHALIA. No, I want to date him!

PORKLOINIUS. What?!

WESTPHALIA. Well, I was frightened at first, but I soon realized that it was Hamlet!

PORKLOINIUS. Hamlet?

WESTPHALIA. Yes!

PORKLOINIUS. The prince went poo-poo in his panty hose and you still want to date him? Absolutely not! Did he say anything to you?

WESTPHALIA. No, he just tossed me around a little.

PORKLOINIUS. He's gone crazy with love.

WESTPHALIA. It's because you made me turn him down. He feels jilted. I would think my rejection would be enough to make any man go crazy.

PORKLOINIUS. Well, it's too late for that now. I can't let you date a lunatic. I don't care how much money he has. Come on, we must go see the King. *(They exit. There is a flourish. KING CLOVEN enters followed by QUEEN SOWARD, ROSENSNOUT, & BACONSTERN.)*

KING. Welcome, Rosensnout and Baconstern! We are glad to have you as guests here at Shishkabob. You've no doubt heard about Hamlet's rather crabby disposition. It appears that his father's death . . . or something else has caused him to be merely the shell of the pig that he once was. I hope that you will stay here and, if all goes well, your presence will have a positive effect on him.

QUEEN. If you could do anything to help him, it would be appreciated. He's really sweet. Well, you both know that.

ROSENSNOUT. I know he's a nice guy, but as far as "sweet" goes, it was Baconstern that roomed with him in college a few years ago.

BACONSTERN. So, what are you saying?

ROSENSNOUT. Just that you two were a lot closer.

BACONSTERN. Be that as it may, we'll do what we can. *(They bow and exit. PORKLOINIUS enters.)*

KING. Ahhh, Porkloinius. Do you have news?

PORKLOINIUS. Yes, Your Highness. The Ambassadors from Boarway have returned. Also, I think I know what's causing Hamlet's nuttiness.

QUEEN. Please, can we call his condition . . . reality challenged?

PORKLOINIUS. I'm sorry, Your Highness.

KING. Let the ambassadors in. We'll discuss Hamlet after.

(CORNSQUEALIUS and BOB enter. BOB drops a rubber duck and a

few scarves. He picks the duck up and a deck of cards falls out of his sleeve and scatters all over the floor.)

CORNSQUEALIUS. Pick those up! You're embarrassing me! Why do you have to carry those things with you?

BOB. I'm an illusionist.

CORNSQUEALIUS. Yes, you give the appearance of being a magician.

KING. Hello, Men, what's the news from Boarway?

CORNSQUEALIUS. Good, my Board! In Boarway, the uncle of Porkinsauce has indeed convinced his nephew to "knock it off".

KING. How did he do that?

BOB. He bribed him. *(BOB'S pants fall to the ground. A sheep bleats. He pulls up his pants and drops some linking rings.)*

CORNSQUEALIUS. We were almost killed in the process, Your Majesty.

KING. What happened? Boarway threatened you?

CORNSQUEALIUS. Boarway ordered a banquet be thrown to celebrate the peace between our kingdoms and Bob volunteered to do some magic.

KING. He messed up the tricks?

CORNSQUEALIUS. All of them. Every cotton pickin' one. Then, he tried to save the evening by doing comedy.

KING. And?

CORNSQUEALIUS. The King wasn't impressed. He told Bob that if he ever set foot in his castle again, he's have him executed.

KING. Is that so? Bob, I'm throwing you in the dungeon for a few days. My recommendation is for you to give up magic. I mean, if you're gonna make other Kings that upset, you could start a war just as an entertainer.

BOB. I understand, Sire.

KING. Sire? Why did you call me "Sire"?

BOB. You sounded a little hoarse to me! Get it?! A little hoarse?

KING. Someone execute him!

BOB. I've got a million more! Some even better! *(Two GUARDS enter and drag BOB away. CORNSQUEALIUS follows.)*

KING. Now that we have that out of the way. Porkloinius! You said you knew the cause of my nephew slash son's moronic . . .

QUEEN. (*Overlapping*) REALITY CHALLENGED!

KING. (*Continuous*) . . . reality challenged behavior?

PORKLOINIUS. Yes. it would appear that he has gone . . .reality challenged . . .because he is in love with my daughter!

KING. That would make him go crazy?

PORKLOINIUS. Have you seen my daughter?

KING. No, but if she's made my son . . .

QUEEN. Nephew . . .

PORKLOINIUS. Stepson . . .

KING. Whatever. If she's made him go mad, then maybe I don't want to see her.

PORKLOINIUS. She's a sweet girl, Your Highness.

KING. Nice personality?

PORKLOINIUS. Yes.

KING. She's a dog. Blind date sort of girl?

PORKLOINIUS. She's my flower, Your Highness!

KING. Wallflower?

PORKLOINIUS. No, she's a honey.

KING. Just what we need, another honey ham around the castle. I thought Honeyglaze flitting around here was enough. Oh, well. Pretty soon we'll have to change the name of the castle from Shishkabob to Sweet Meats Manor. (*To QUEEN*) Make a note, Dear. We need to get new letterhead paper.

QUEEN. How can you tell that Hamlet has gone mad with love for your daughter?

PORKLOINIUS. (*Producing a piece of paper*) He gave her this note.

KING. The prince is passing love letters?

PORKLOINIUS. And pooping in his panty hose.

QUEEN. Please, Porkloinius! Can we not call it "doing number 2"?

PORKLOINIUS. A thousand pardons, Your Highness. Now, let me read you the contents of this letter. *To the larger than life, most corpulent, and well rounded woman in the kingdom, Westphalia . . .*

KING. My goodness! He is in love!

PORKLOINIUS. That was just the greeting, My Board.

KING. Well, don't ham it up! Get to the meat of it!

PORKLOINIUS. (*Reading*) *So, you don't want to have anything to do with me, huh? Well, fine! I would love you all the days of your life, but*

since you choose to be so pig-headed about this matter . . .then you can shove it, Sister! I don't have time to waste my life on unrequited love! You rejections have made me mad! I won't take this anymore! If I can't be with the one I love . . .then I'll love the one I'm with! Hamlet.

QUEEN. "Love the one he's with"? But he's always alone. (*CLOVEN and PORKLOINIUS give each other a strange look.*)

KING. Why would your daughter be so stupid as to reject the love of a prince? Why would she be so . . .moronic? So . . .dumb. So, air-headed?!

PORKLOINIUS. I instructed her to do so.

KING. Oh, well, in that case it makes perfect sense.

PORKLOINIUS. Do you want to see Hamlet in action?

QUEEN. What do you mean?

KING. You mean look at him losing it? (*PORKLOINIUS nods*) Sure, it could be fun. Kinda like the sick glee one feels when salt is poured on a slug. We'll hide and watch him from the balcony.

QUEEN. What's that smell?

KING. What do you mean?

QUEEN. I smell foul bacon!

KING. Sorry, my tummy's a little rumbly. (*Pause*) Let's go. (*They exit. HAMLET enters carrying a book.*)

PORKLOINIUS. Hello, Your Majesty!

HAMLET. Great pig in the mornin'! You scared the rind right off me!

PORKLOINIUS. Do you know me?

HAMLET. Of course, you're that star of stage and screen Boaris Karloff! You belong on the screen . . .fifty feet tall!

PORKLOINIUS. And what stage do I belong on?

HAMLET. (*Like Groucho Marx*) The first one out of town! (*Pause. To someone offstage*) Can I get a rim shot? (*Someone offstage says "Prince Hamlet wants a rim-shot". One follows.*)

PORKLOINIUS. Are you alright, Hamlet?

HAMLET. How can I be "all right" when there's only one of me? (*Pause*) Say, do you have a daughter?

PORKLOINIUS. I have.

HAMLET. I wouldn't let her walk out in the sun, if I were you. Well, not unless she rubs herself in butter.

PORKLOINIUS. Butter, My Lord?

HAMLET. Of course not! Do you see me eating bread? You're a weird one Boaris, aren't you?! I would consider it a personal favor if you never ask me that again! It's disturbing. I mean, how would you like it if I walked up to you and asked, just out of the blue, "Crisco?" I don't want to tell you how to live your life, Mr. K, but we do things a little different here at Camelot.

PORKLOINIUS. *(Confused)* I beg your pardon, Your Highness.

(Pause) What are you reading?

HAMLET. I don't know. It's in Braille. I think it's . . . it's . . . it's a moving story about a woman named Dot. I'd say more, but I don't want to mention your buttocks and thighs. *(Silence. ROSENSNOUT and BACONSTERN enter flipping a coin and calling "snout". As they cross, HAMLET glares at them and says)* Hello, Spies. *(ROSENSNOUT and BACONSTERN stop and stare at HAMLET, innocently.)*

PORKLOINIUS. I will take my leave of you.

HAMLET. You'll do what?

PORKLOINIUS. Take my leave of you.

HAMLET. Is that your fancy pants way of saying that you're gonna hoof it out of here?

PORKLOINIUS. Yes, My Lord.

HAMLET. *THEN WHY DON'T YOU SAY THAT?!!!!* *(Pause)* Sorry. *(PORKLOINIUS exits.)*

ROSENSNOUT. Greetings, Prince.

BACONSTERN. Hello, Your Highness.

HAMLET. Please, call me "Hammie".

ROSENSNOUT. I don't think I can do that.

HAMLET. Why not?

ROSENSNOUT. I'll laugh.

HAMLET. Okay.

BACONSTERN. Why did you call us spies?

HAMLET. Did the two of you see anything when you entered the room?

BACONSTERN. Of course.

HAMLET. Then you were in the act of spying, so I called you spies.

ROSENSNOUT. Oh, I see.

HAMLET. So, you are indeed a spy. *(Pause)* Did you want to tell me something?

BACONSTERN. Yes, Your Highness, there appear to be wolves at the castle gate.

HAMLET. Wolves?

ROSENSNOUT. Actors.

HAMLET. What are you saying about performers? They're not wolves. They're just poor. I would go so far as to call them scavengers, but not wolves.

ROSENSNOUT. Well, these actors are wolves. They wish to be let in.

HAMLET. Well, let them in! I'd love to see a show!

BACONSTERN. Hamlet, you know what we've been told about why we shouldn't be in the same company as these types.

HAMLET. What?

BACONSTERN. Well, they eat our kind.

ROSENSNOUT. I have to agree. Despite what they say, they could pose a threat.

HAMLET. What do they say?

BACONSTERN. They say that they're Jewish wolves and they don't eat pork.

HAMLET. Well, there you are! Let them in!

ROSENSNOUT. But,...

HAMLET. No, butts! Let the wolves into Shishkabob! We shall prepare a feast!

BACONSTERN. Or else become one. *(A PACK OF WOLVES enter. Jewish music plays. All of the wolves wear yarmulkes.)*

HAMLET. Welcome, players! Please, Baconstern, you and Rosensnout go and inform the King that we have in our castle a group of very special guests. Let Shishkabob be your home while you are in town and you are extended all of the courtesies that we would extend any honorable guest that would tromp across our welcome mat.

FIRST PLAYER. What?

HAMLET. I'm glad you're here. *(All of the WOLVES understand and respond with head nodding. ROSENSNOUT and BACONSTERN exit.)* Tell me, are you famous?

FIRST PLAYER. In certain circles. We normally play bar mitzvahs and weddings this time of year, but we decided to tour around our musical production of *Fiddler on the Hoof*.

HAMLET. You appear to know your art well, Sir.

FIRST PLAYER. What is that supposed to mean? A Jewish wolf isn't supposed to be able to make it in this world? Is that what you're saying?

HAMLET. Of course not. You're in show business, it should serve you well.

FIRST PLAYER. What should serve me well? Being Jewish? Is that a crack at my religion and nationality?

HAMLET. Absolutely not! I'm pointing out your strong points!

FIRST PLAYER. It sounded like a crack! I don't like cracks!

HAMLET. Believe me, I meant no disrespect.

FIRST PLAYER. *(A little skeptical)* Okay, if you say so. *(Pause)* Do you have any matzos?

HAMLET. No, I don't think so. *(Pause)* We're not Jewish. Remember?

FIRST PLAYER. Do you have any crumb cake? I love a good crumb cake.

HAMLET. I'll check. *(A beat)* But first, I need to find out a little about you. Do you just go around doing *Fiddler*?

FIRST PLAYER. Oh, no. We've also done famous plays by Neil Swinemon.

HAMLET. Oh, really? Which ones?

FIRST PLAYER. *Barefoot in the Pork, The Last of the Red Hot Porkers, The Good Hockster, The Star-Spangled Boar, Bright Pigs Honored, Biloxi Hams, and Tablecloth Bound: A Gentile Christmas.* We've done them all. We love you pigs. . . figuratively speaking of course.

HAMLET. Do you think you could do a play that I wrote?

FIRST PLAYER. I'm sorry, Prince. We're professionals. This is our art. I mean, each one of us has spent years training to be great actors, and playwrights, and musicians . . . and to have that infiltrated by the work of an amateur who (and I mean no disrespect by this) doesn't know diddly squat about our craft would be . . . artistic sellout. We wouldn't be able to look at ourselves in the mirror each day. You understand, don't you?

HAMLET. I'll triple your normal fee.

FIRST PLAYER. We can start rehearsing within the hour, if that's good for you.

HAMLET. Perfect. We will see the play tomorrow night. Get your actors together and we will begin rehearsing after lunch. *(The WOLVES*

nod and exit. HAMLET speaks to himself.) This is my chance. Everyone thinks I'm nuts and that frees me to act out of the ordinary, but the King has no excuse. I'll have the players recreate what the ghost told me and we will see how he reacts! If he is innocent, then it will have no effect on his Royal Highness. . .but if he's guilty . . .I will see it!
(HAMLET starts off) Now, to lunch and then to work. The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King! *(HAMLET runs off as . . .)*

FADEOUT

INTERMISSION

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