

Cast of Characters

CHIP, the male narrator
JESSIE, the female narrator
ACTRESS
HAMLET
GERTRUDE
CLAUDIUS
THE GHOST
VILLAGERS
HERALD
ACTOR
PLAYERS
POLONIUS
LAERTES
OPHELIA
SERVANTS 1-3
GRAVEDIGGER
LOUNGE SINGER
BACK-UP DANCERS 1-3

CHIP
JESSIE
SIDE

Feel free to double cast as many parts as necessary. Some of the roles may be cross-cast without losing anything. I could easily see the Gravedigger and the Lounge Singer being female.

Author Notes

On Pacing and Speed:

This play should be done very quickly. If nothing is cut, it should last about 40 minutes. If you need to cut to get under a time limit—you can cut the Ghost / Hamlet scene in Act Two and the Back-up dancers and lounge singers in Act 5.

On Copyright:

This play is meant as parody.

THE HAMLET THRILL-MA-GEDDON

(ONE-ACT VERSION)

by Don Zolidis

(A largely bare stage.)

(Two Narrators, CHIP and JESSIE, enter.)

CHIP. Before we begin, I'd like to make the following announcements: Please turn off all cell phones and beepers.

(CHIP turns off his iPhone.)

JESSIE. And iPhones, and iPads, and Nooks, and Grendels, and any other technological device. Turn it off. Go ahead. Turn 'em all off.

CHIP. Feel better?

(Short pause. CHIP turns his iPhone back on.)

I can't do it! I can't live without this!

JESSIE. Stop it or we'll send you back to the clinic!

(She snatches his iPhone.)

CHIP. Noooooooooo.

JESSIE. Okay, now that that's over with—

(CHIP takes out another iPhone. JESSIE spots him.)

CHIP. What? This is like air to me. I'm so ashamed.

(He hands over his second iPhone.)

JESSIE. Now, I know what you're thinking:

CHIP. How does he have two iPhones?

JESSIE. No. You're thinking: Don't they normally do this announcement over the P.A. system? And don't they normally have fancy costumes? And isn't there normally a set?

CHIP. And is he single? Yes, ladies. Yes.

(ACTRESS runs on, throws a shoe at CHIP, and runs off crying.)
JESSIE. Well—funny story. Our school district has had what we like to refer to as...a systematic financial implosion.

(CHIP makes a sound like an implosion.)

So our theatre budget has been...

CHIP. Annihilated.

JESSIE. Reduced.

CHIP. Chopped up into little pieces and eaten by trolls.

JESSIE. Our theatre teacher spends most of her time holding herself* and crying softly.

**Feel free to change this to director, or even name the theatre director and point to him or her.*

CHIP. It's really kind of sad.

JESSIE. But do we give up?

CHIP. Almost. Quite possibly.

JESSIE. NO! We don't give up! We were all set to press on with our theatre budget of four dollars and a pair of used socks—

CHIP. And we were going to give you a really awesome low budget show!

JESSIE. In forty minutes or less, because after this the school district has rented this space out to a scrapbooking convention—

CHIP. Lots of pretty ladies at the scrapbooking convention. I dress up like a sticker salesman and—

JESSIE. Chip.

CHIP. Sorry.

JESSIE. So we were going to do that, try our best, and then someone had a great idea—

CHIP. Let's sell out! Corporate sponsors, product placement, advertising inside the play—

JESSIE. But if we have corporate sponsors they're going to want to change the show! What about having a pure artistic experience—the next thing you know we'll be rewriting the play just to make our sponsors happy. And how many sponsors can we possibly have, anyway?

CHIP. You ever see NASCAR? Like that.

JESSIE. Won't you feel bad about it?

CHIP. Sure, but then I'll go home and float in a kiddie pool filled with sweet, delicious cash. And that will make me feel better.

JESSIE. So the choice was clear: Sell out to corporate greed or maintain our artistic purity and—

CHIP. We sold out.

JESSIE. Of course we sold out!

(She claps her hands, and banners unfurl around the theatre proclaiming various ridiculous ridiculous corporate sponsors.)

(Lights down as the set is rolled out.)

JESSIE. *(Into microphone.)* And now...

CHIP. THE MOMENT YOU HAVE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR!

JESSIE. Dr. Pepper presents Disney's Hamlet!

CHIP. Live from the Gatorade Theatre!

JESSIE. Sponsored by the good people at Tucks Medicated Pads!

(Lights up on the stage. A vague representation of a castle, perhaps with a few advertisements prominently displayed.)

CHIP. Hamlet, Act One—

JESSIE. Brought to you by GlaxoSmithKline, improving your life through pharmaceuticals since 1954.

CHIP. It was a dark and stormy night, and inside Dr. Pepper castle, the new king was talking to his subjects.

(Enter CLAUDIUS and GERTRUDE, the king and queen. CLAUDIUS speaks like a politician.)

~~CLAUDIUS: My royal subjects! I know that there have been some difficult times out there lately—we're all hurting right now after my brother's death, but this is a time for this nation to come together. Let's be honest: we all liked him. He had a great beard. I was always envious of that beard. Not so envious that I would kill, let's put that rumor to bed. Read my lips: I did not have murderous relations with my brother. I'm glad we can put that issue to rest, and I hope that the people who were saying those things enjoy their time being tortured.~~

(Far-off scream.)

Now, I'm not here to talk about my personal wife, I mean life, but—again—people have been talking, so yes, I have married Gertrude. And some of you sickos out there think it's a little weird that I married my brother's wife two days after he died, but you should be ashamed of yourselves and you will also be tortured.

(Far-off scream.)

(GERTRUDE steps forward.)

GERTRUDE. My people. I loved my dead husband very much which is why I married his brother. They kind of look similar. I know there's an ewww factor out there—but we'll all get over it—and now to take your mind off of that...bunnies. Thank you.

The Hamlet Thrill-ma-geddon (one-act)

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CLAUDIUS
SIDE

JESSIE. *(Quickly)* Weight gain, depression, insanity, numbness in fingers and toes, a tendency to soliloquize, and in rare cases, seeing ghosts. CHIP. And remember to ask your doctor!

JESSIE. Let's check in on another scene, shall we? CHIP. It was a dark and stormy night. And the King's advisor, Polonius, was having a little chat with his children.

(Thunder. Enter POLONIUS, LAERTES, and OPHELIA.)

POLONIUS. My children, come to me.

LAERTES. Yes, Dad?

OPHELIA. What is it, father?

POLONIUS. First let us drink some Dr. Pepper.

(He hands out cans.)

LAERTES. I shall treasure this.

OPHELIA. I'm feeling adventurous and carefree.

POLONIUS. Let's have a fatherly chat. See, I'm about to give you some great advice: Laertes, my son, I'm sending you away to school in France because our educational system in Denmark is terrible. I've also heard that France is nice.

LAERTES. I'll write to you.

POLONIUS. Whatever. And Ophelia—my daughter—are you still going out with Hamlet?

OPHELIA. I guess so. He doesn't like talk to me much anymore.

POLONIUS. Well, he's going through a rough patch what with his father dying and his mother marrying his uncle. But he still likes you right?

OPHELIA. I guess. I think he doesn't like me as much as he used to.

POLONIUS. Why is that?

OPHELIA. Can I show you in flashback?

POLONIUS. Please.

(HAMLET enters, wearing black again. OPHELIA runs up to him.)

CHIP. *(Quickly)* Flashback sponsored by McDonald's!

JESSIE. Ba-dum-bum-bum-bum.

OPHELIA. There you are!

HAMLET. Hey Ophelia.

OPHELIA. I was looking everywhere for you! I'm so worried about you when I can't see you! I think, what is he doing, who is he talking to, is he talking to another girl, cause I mean like you're the prince and you're so amazing, I can't believe you liked me—do you think I'm gaining weight? What are you thinking right now? Tell me tell me I want to know what's going on in your head at all times I wrote you a letter last night—

(Takes out twenty-page letter.)

And I'm thinking that we'll have three kids and we'll name one of them Hamlophilia, because that's like both of our names together and it's pretty and I love you please don't leave me! You don't like it? What about Omlot, then? Why don't you ever tell me what you're thinking? I want to know what you're feeling right now! Please when you don't talk to me it makes me crazy I love you please—there isn't another girl is there, there's another girl, who is she *I'll kill her!* Don't think I'm crazy it's just because I love you so much you're the prince and you're awesome—is the reason you don't talk to me because I gained weight? It was just a little bit of weight you don't think I'm fat do you? Am I fat? Am I getting too fat for you! I knew it! I bet that other girl is skinny isn't she *I'll snap her like a TWIG!*

(Short pause.)

Why won't you talk to me?

(She returns back to her father.)

I don't know what's wrong. He just seems distant lately.

(POLONIUS considers this as CHIP and JESSIE non-in.)

JESSIE. Whoah there little horsey!

CHIP. How many of you out there have girlfriends who behave the exact same way? I know I do!

(ACTRESS reappears for a moment and glares at him.)

ACTRESS. I'll get you, Chip.

(She leaves.)

JESSIE. It's called Clingy Girlfriend Anxiety Disorder. Or C-Gad for short.

CHIP. C-Gad!

JESSIE. But never fear ladies—GlaxoSmithKline has a new product on the market—Relaxafem! You can take it and it will make all the difference!

CHIP. Which you might not because of repeated concussions—
JESSIE. Instead of actually going out and killing Claudius like he
was supposed to, Hamlet decides to put on a show—

*(The PLAYERS enter, in some combination of athletic gear and
costumes.)*

JESSIE. Before the game—

CHIP. Before the performance—

JESSIE. Prepare—

CHIP. For domination.

(HAMLET talks to his actors.)

HAMLET. All right men. Let's take a moment before the perfor-
mance. You might get nervous out there. You might tremble and
think, 'can I do it?' And my answer to you, friends, is yes, you can—

(He stops. Then walks towards one of his players.)

What is this?

(He rips a water bottle from the PLAYER's hand.)

PLAYER. Water?

HAMLET. Water? You're drinking water?

PLAYER. Well I just... I just... I get thirsty... and then I need—

HAMLET. This is disgusting!

(He furiously tosses the water bottle away.)

When you're in a pressure situation, do you want water running
through your veins? Do you want water, with its measly zero calories,
with its complete lack of sugar and artificial coloring? I say no! I say
no more water! Ever! We must be at the peak of performance, men!
We must stand upon the stage and shout out truth to the world, and
not, I repeat, NOT, get dehydrated! Your voices must be as supple as
soft leather, your muscles must be lithe and ready—to PERFORM—
to hold the mirror up to nature and show just how awesome you are!
No, men, no water on this day. Today we drink: Gatorade Prepare.

(He lifts a bottle of Gatorade Prepare.)

With its artful combination of subtle fruit flavors and bone-crushing
electrolytes, Gatorade Prepare is the prince of energy drinks, just as
I am price of the Danes.

PLAYER. But I also heard that some people like a good crick-

HAMLET SIDE

The Hamlet Thriller ~~and~~ *get don* (one-act) 21

HAMLET. How dare you, sir? How dare you speak of Powerade at
a time like this? No! If any man here drinks Powerade, I will have
them whipped! Let us drink our Gatorade Prepare—let us raise our
bottles—and go forth—GO FORTH!

ALL PLAYERS. *(Raising bottles.)* GATORADE PREPARE!

(They drink as one and surge off the stage.)

*(Light change to the play-within-a-play. CHIP and JESSIE have
microphones.)*

CHIP. Crunch time.

JESSIE. The time Gatorade was born for.

HAMLET. Your Majesty. Mom. I have prepared a play for you today.

GERTRUDE. That's great, Hamlet. It's nice to see you applying
yourself.

CLAUDIUS. Bah. There's no future in the theatre.

HAMLET. Be that as it may—I think you will like this play a lot, your
Majesty. A whole lot. In fact, you might see something of yourself in
it. A whole lot of something of yourself.

CLAUDIUS. Our young Hamlet speaks in riddles.

HAMLET. No. I speak in plays. And in actions. And in kicking butt.
With Gatorade Performance.

GERTRUDE. I never could stomach those sport drinks.

HAMLET. Well, you always had a weak stomach, mother. Behold:
My play is called: The Mousetrap, with the subtitle, the Play that
Will Make You Exclaim and Therefore Confirm Your Guilt. Or just
plain Mousetrap.

CLAUDIUS. An odd title. Let us have this play!

HAMLET. Bring it!

*(The PLAYERS enter. One is dressed exactly like Claudius. One is
cross-dressed exactly like Gertrude. A third is dressed like the King.)*

PLAYER KING. Oh my dearest wife. I love you so much my heart is
about to burst. It's a good thing I am a perfect husband.

PLAYER GERTRUDE. You are indeed a perfect husband, my lord.
And I like to appear to be a perfect wife.

(Aside to the audience.)

However, I am a heartless and lusty wench.

PLAYER KING. What was that?

I SHOULD BE CHARMING AND HANDSOME
BUT INSTEAD I FEEL GREY

(He begins to move about the courtyard, arms outstretched.)

I WANT

I WANT

THERE'S A LIFE FOR ME SOMEWHERE

THERE'S A LIFE OUT THERE

IF I CAN ONLY REACH UP AND SEIZE IT

GRAB LIFE BY THE HAIR!

(Grabs somebody by the hair.)

VILLAGER. Ow

(HAMLET ignores the VILLAGER and spins some more.)

HAMLET. *(Singing.)*

I WANT

I WANT

A LIFE WHERE I'M HAPPY

A LIFE WHERE I'M GOOD

A PLACE TO BE DASHING

NOT MISUNDERSTOOD

(He takes out his sword and swings it willy-nilly.)

I WANT

I WANT

TO BE JUST LIKE THE OTHERS

A PLAIN COMMON MAN

(He accentuates the point by stabbing with the sword, accidentally killing VILLAGER 4.)

VILLAGER 4. *(Dying.)* It's an honor to be stabbed by you sir.

HAMLET. *(Unaware, continuing to sing.)*

NOT A PRINCE ANYMORE

NOT HAMLET, JUST HAM.

(He stops singing for a moment, then starts up again suddenly.)

OH ONE MORE THING

I ALSO HAVE TO KILL MY UNCLE

(He stops singing. The VILLAGERS drag off VILLAGER 4.)

VILLAGERS. *(Singing.)*

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PRINCE THERE'S

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PRINCE.

(The VILLAGERS exit.)

HEAD PLAYER & ACTOR SIDE

HAMLET. If only I had some kind of dramatic inspiration right now.

(A HERALD blows a trumpet.)

HERALD. Make way! Make way! The dramatically inspiring Players are here!

(The PLAYERS enter. They are quite silly and probably should have at least one hippo amongst them.)

HEAD PLAYER. Citizens of Denmark! I am here to present to you the most brilliantest, most amazingacious, most stupendously incredible group of actors your puny nation has ever seen!

(An ACTOR runs up and bows. He's quite silly. If he were an animal, he would be a bird.)

Behold the actor Crookinghall. The finest dramatic actor the world has ever seen. Watch! Watch as he performs the role of Priam from Euripides' smash hit, "Hecuba!"

ACTOR. Hecuba! Hecuuuubaaaa! Hecuba Hecuba Hecuba Hecuba!
Oh oh oh oh oh! Aaaaaaaagrrhghghg!

(He stabs himself.)

Acccck! I'm killing myself! I'm killing myself now! It hurts a lot!

(He stabs himself again.)

Oh so much! Why do I keep on stabbing myself? Why?!

(Stab stab stab.)

Hecuuuuu-baaa!

(He gets up, spins around, then dies again.)

Now I'm dead.

(HAMLET. That was quite dramatically inspiring.)

HEAD PLAYER. Thank you my lord. Perhaps we could perform a play for the new king?

HAMLET. Indeed. I'm beginning to come up with an idea. Now get out of here. I'm crazy.

HEAD PLAYER. Right away sir!

(The PLAYERS scamper off.)

HAMLET. If only there was someone I could confide in.

(The GHOST enters, to stirring music. The GHOST is not blue and has more than a passing resemblance to the genie from Aladdin.)

GHOST. Hamm—letttt.

CHIP. And fellas—if you fear your lady friend is suffering from C-Gad, you can just slip a little Relaxafem in her drink, and bingo! She'll be right back to the way you want her to be!

JESSIE. Let's watch this little scene again, but this time let's give Ophelia a pharmacological adjustment!

(OPHELIA and HAMLET *rewind*.)

CHIP. And go!

(HAMLET *enters*. OPHELIA *approaches*.)

OPHELIA. Hey!

HAMLET. Hey.

(*Pause*.)

So have you been thinking about our relationship?

OPHELIA. Nope.

CHIP. And Bingo! Perfect girlfriend.

JESSIE. Some side effects include uncontrollable weight gain and suicidal tendencies.

CHIP. But tests are inconclusive!

JESSIE. And finally—we do have one more scene to show you.

CHIP. It was a dark and stormy night.

(*Thunder*. HAMLET *enters in black, outside*.)

~~SOIL. And Hamlet was taking any pills.~~

HAMLET. All right—I'm starting to get depressed again, and that's when I start talking to myself, which is a problem, but I'm not going crazy—I'm not—

(*The GHOST enters*.)

What the heck is that?!

(*The GHOST holds up a hand*.)

What are you?!

GHOST. (*Ghostily*;) Ham-lettttt...

HAMLET. How do you know my name?!

GHOST. (*Ghostily*;) Ham-letttt...

HAMLET. That's my name again! Are you some kind of ghost?

GHOST. Folllllow Meeeee...

HAMLET & GHOST SIDE

The Hamlet I killed the goddamn tone and

(*The GHOST walks a little ways*.)

HAMLET. Do I follow? He knows my name. What could this be? Is it a trick?

(*The GHOST beckons*.)

It's doing it again. But what could it mean?

GHOST. Just shut up and get over here.

HAMLET. Dad?

GHOST. Yes.

HAMLET. But...you're dead!

GHOST. Yeah, I know. Bummer. But... I have come back to tell you... I was murdered!

HAMLET. No way!

GHOST. Yes!

HAMLET. Are you serious?

GHOST. Yes I am very serious I was murdered.

HAMLET. Who could have done this?

GHOST. Is it really so hard to figure out? Let's see—who had a motive to kill me? Who could it have been? Who could possibly have had a motive to murder me?

HAMLET. I don't know.

GHOST. Seriously, you don't know?

HAMLET. No.

GHOST. Claudius.

HAMLET. It was Claudius?!

GHOST. Yes!

HAMLET. Very well father! I shall avenge you! In a little while! But first I will pretend to be insane for no apparent reason!

(*The lights go down on them*.)

CHIP. Let's begin ahead, shall we?

JESSIE. To Act Two! brought to you...by Disney.

(*Lights up on the courtyard of the castle. Everything is bright and slightly cartoony. Perhaps music plays in the background.*)

(*Note: All of the singing in this section may be done a cappella. You are welcome to create your own tunes. It doesn't have to be*