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Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:**

**'ratio:**

**An Experiment in Collaboration and Generating Narrative**

**APPROVED BY  
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

**Supervisor:**

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Richard Isackes

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**'ratio:**

**An Experiment in Collaboration and Generating Narrative**

**by**

**William Craig Anderson, B.A**

**Thesis**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

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## **Abstract**

**'ratio:**

### **An Experiment in Collaboration and Generating Narrative**

William Craig Anderson, M.F.A

The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

Supervisor: Richard Isackes

*'ratio*, is a new play that was conceived as a collaborative experiment to investigate the possibility of a playwright and designer co-authoring a script through their preferred mediums; written text and visual art. The final script document consists of both a written text and visual narrative text, asking the reader to create and interpret the story through both mediums.

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## INTRODUCTION

I am a scenic designer. I am a sculptor of space and sight. I carve, mold and assemble performance environments. I seek to engage audiences with theater that is spectacular, visceral and experiential. I am an artisan of visual stories, but these stories are usually born from a playwright's initial textual narrative. Prior to this thesis I viewed a theatre designer's work as non-generative, in reaction to a playwright's text. As a visual author, I reacted to but did not control narrative. What would happen if a visual author was there from the beginning, crafting and molding the story with a playwright as an integral part of the generative process? What would be the challenges and benefits of a playwright and designer collaboration? *'ratio* was conceived as such an experiment. It asks the question, is it possible for a playwright and designer to co-author a script by each working in their primary mediums.

One evening at a showcase of designers' work, David Turkel, an MFA candidate in the playwriting program at The University of Texas at Austin, and I began a conversation about the potential authorial role of the designer as visual dramaturg. Turkel was intrigued by the notion of a designer in the room from the beginning of the conceptual and narrative process. He asked if I wanted to read a fifteen-page synopsis on a play he wanted to write. I agreed to read the text but had questions about how the process might work. How would such collaboration be negotiated? I have a lot of respect for Turkel and I had seen his work before, so after reading the fifteen pages I agreed to undertake this journey. Thus, the *'ratio* project was born—a project where text narrative and visual narrative would be in constant conversation throughout the creation of the play.



## DEVELOPING

### FALL 2012: BEGINNING

It became apparent that in order to move forward, Turkel and I needed to define a structure within which we could collaborate. Collaboration is a loosely understood concept; however, for Turkel and I, collaboration meant that we both had to be equals: to have an equal investment in the project, equal credit, and produce work equally. All of this would be essential in achieving our goal of developing a new method of generating theatrical narrative.

Narrative is broadly defined by Merriam-Webster as “a story that is told or written (Narrative).” For me, Theatrical narrative is a progression of connected events; a story that is meant to be performed on the stage in space and time. In most traditional plays the connected events are united by spoken language. In Theatrical Realism, these events follow one from another in a logical order, enacted by characters who are familiar representations of real human types. (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica) Roland Barthes, a well-regarded literary theory voice of the 1970s in Europe and America, argues that these texts are *readerly* and are presented in a familiar, linear, manner (Barthes 4). They adhere to the status quo in style and content. Meaning is pre-determined and fixed so that the reading is controlled. These texts often attempt to repress elements that encourage multiple readings. In contrast, Barthes also defines another type of text as a *writerly* text—one that reveals and foregrounds the ambiguities that the readerly text attempts to hide. The reader now assumes a co-authorial role in the construction of meaning (Barthes 4). In the *readerly* text, the stability of linear narrative structure is often contested. Turkel and I agreed that we wanted to create a text that was both *readerly* and *writerly*. To achieve a *readerly* and *writerly* text, we looked to create

what Barthes refers to as “an ideal text (Barthes 5).” Barthes proposed that “an ideal text” blurs the distinction between the reader and writer:

. . . the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach, they are indeterminable . . . ; the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language (Barthes 5).

With the goal of creating an ideal text, Turkel and I met, discussed, and began to define the next steps in the process. We began slowly, discussing three to four events of the current narrative that we were both interested in exploring. We then separated and worked for one to two weeks, with minimal conversation. Turkel wrote text based events and I created visual 2D events. When we both felt ready to share our work, we came together. Turkel sent me his text the evening before our meeting, so that I would have a chance to read it. I shared my imagery when we met in person. While examining our contributions, we discussed several things: where overlaps existed, which events were similar in tone style and narrative, where conflicts existed and where one event was stronger than the other. We found that more often than not, our event planning blended together in strange, unusual, and exciting ways. As we continued in this process, our work began to overlap more and conflict less. It was during the initial generative sessions that a series of chalk drawings I created became a major inspiration for both of us. These

images while suggestive of shape, location and content, were ambiguous enough to allow any viewer to construct their own story. As a consequence the beginnings of a visual, *writerly* narrative began to emerge.



Illustration One: At the Window



Illustration Two: Stairway



Illustration Three: On the Rails



Illustration Four: Untitled



Illustration Five: Cell

As we created and negotiated our events a narrative began to emerge organically. Two months later, Turkel had written ninety pages of narrative text and I had created thirty-three visual narrative images.

### **SPRING 2013: FIRST DRAFT**

The next step of this creative process was to take the draft and compose the written text and the visual text into one script artifact that could be shared with a dramaturg, director and actors. Our challenge was to situate both texts as co-equal components. We wanted to ask the reader to simultaneously decode the *readerly* written text, while at the same time constructing an open set of meanings from the imagery of the visual text. In Wolfgang Iser's *The Act of Reading: a theory of aesthetic response* in which he concludes that "literary work has two poles: the artistic and the aesthetic. He argues that the artistic pole is the author's text and the aesthetic is the realization accomplished by the reader." Basically stating that the reader forms an image in his mind, of the text he has just read. In our first draft, we problematized this assertion by providing both written and visual text simultaneously allowing the reader to integrate both into a personalized "aesthetic" response.

As we pushed further into the process, Turkel and I joined a professional development workshop (PDW) class at The University of Texas at Austin, in the Department of Theater and Dance. The goal of this class was to workshop the first draft of the script with Dan Rothenberg from Pig Iron Theatre Company. Pig Iron is a contemporary ensemble based theatre company focusing mainly on new performance work that defy easy categorization. Working with Rothenberg, we were interested to discover how our classmates would receive the binary text and how they would

understand it as constructed narrative. What we discovered, while viewing readers of this text, was that people resisted the role of active reader, they were afraid of imposing an inappropriate narrative from the visuals onto the written text. Reading a text is a learned skill, a skill that is developed not only from a cultural standpoint of what ‘is’ and ‘what is not’ appropriate, but also from a fundamental, learned methodology of reading. When working in this unfamiliar doubled narrative, understanding relies on the ability to shift to a new way of reading—a reading tactic that is not only foreign but also troubling to the average reader. The question became; how, after the ideal text is created, do we teach actors, directors, audiences and dramaturges a new way of reading? The investigations of the class allowed us to isolate some major conflicts in the first draft of the script.

What we discovered was that the written script, was more *readerly* than *writerly*, even when accompanied by the visual text. In a sense, both texts were redundant because they provided the same information to the reader—each acting as an illustration of the other. We had not created enough space for the reader to generate his or her own aesthetic meaning. When the visual narrative was accompanied by text the visuals never assumed an individual identity.

In the post workshop process, Turkel and I attempted to separate the texts, break them open, and rebuild. We learned that the visual text and written text needed separate identities. They could not co-exist as we intended them if they shared the same information because together they shut down a “writerly” interpretation. Each needed to support the events with different information, in order to open up avenues for the reader’s aesthetic interpretation.

## **SUMMER 2013: REVISION**

With all of these realizations, Turkel and I took the summer to work and answer our major concern; how do we combine the two narratives to create the text that we had imagined--a text in which the reader takes control and has an active role in their reading? As Turkel and I worked, we began to simplify the necessary elements on stage. In the first draft we had more than twenty performers and dozens of locations. I suggested that the show be produced with ten performers and a bench. Thus, we revised our work even further. It was also during the summer revision that we formed a new description for our work. This project was not just a script and not just an artbook, and so we devised the term art-script. In August, we were informed that the play was going to be produced as a part of UTNT, (University of Texas New Theatre Festival) in the Spring of 2014. This was our chance to see the script in actual production.



## PRODUCTION

### FALL 2013: FINAL ART-SCRIPT

We completed a new draft of the art-script that we felt moved close to our goal of an ideal text. With the knowledge that this art-script was going to have a spring production, we began a fall workshop in order to navigate how to blend visuals as text and text as visuals onstage. Most of the original artwork was discarded; all that remained were the black and white chalk drawings. We used these as a foundation to create both new imagery and major writing edits. My intent was that the embodied visuals created in this workshop would become the basis of the final art-script; however, the workshop ultimately was more useful for developing the written narrative the visual narrative. We continued to struggle with how to translate visual narrative to the stage and how it was to be deciphered by the audience. I was determined to balance out the two narratives and began to re-assemble the art-script again. I removed written narrative and replaced it with visual information. I was determined to make both narratives work in conversation with each other, and make both equally important. This became a tougher job than I had originally imagined, but the script was becoming more *writerly*.



Illustration Six: Final Art-script Pages 18-19



Illustration Seven: Final Art-script Pages 68-69

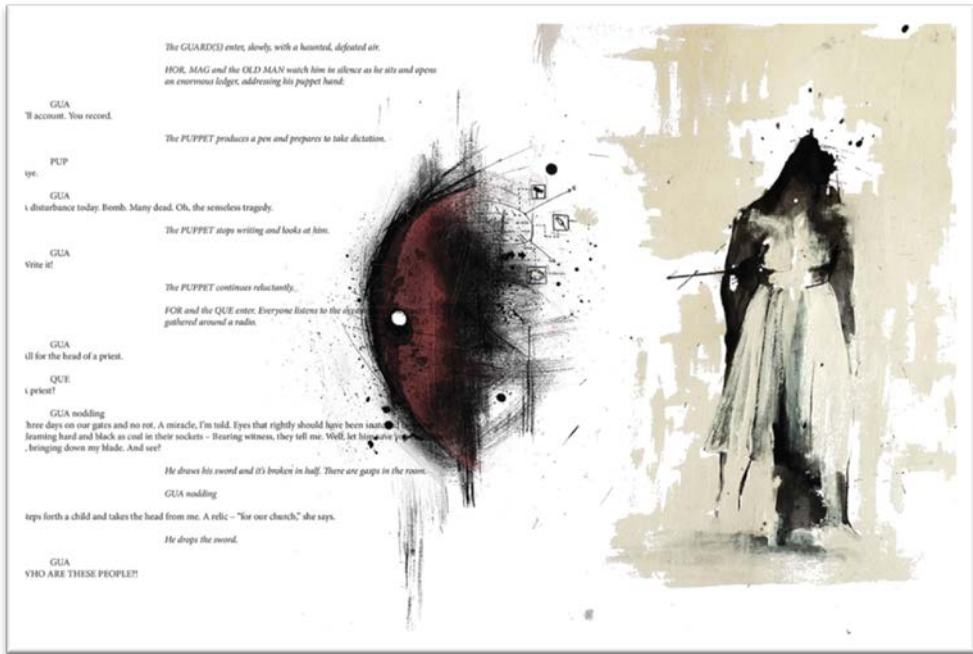


Illustration Eight: Final Art-script Pages 88-89

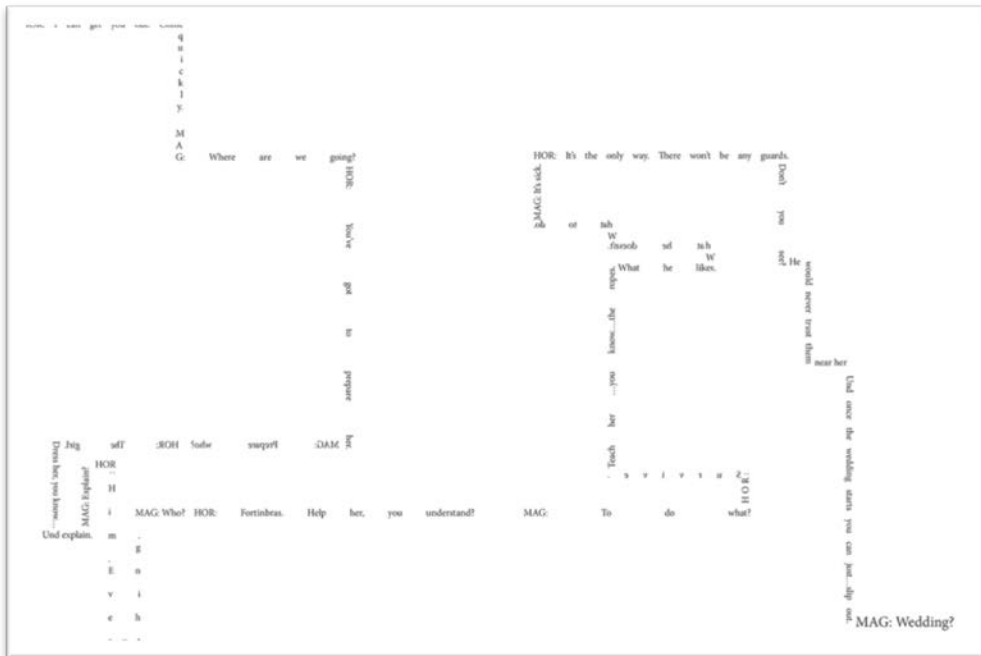


Illustration Nine: Final Art-script Pages 120-121

## **SPRING 2014: UTNT**

By February of 2014, I was three months into the creation of the new art-script and the production was in rehearsal for UTNT. The rehearsal process followed a traditional theatre production model in that the director assumed the primary authority. The director did not work with the visual text. Thus the only part of our collaboration that was used in the development of the UTNT production was the written text. This was supposed to be our chance to experiment with how an audience and actors would understand the art-script as a *readerly* and *writerly* text. The lack of ability and desire on the part of the director and actors to investigate a non-traditional rehearsal format undermined any chance of the visual narrative being present in the performance. Almost as an afterthought there were attempts at integrating the visual narrative, (Illustration Ten and Eleven), but it was soon cut and nothing from the visual narrative was incorporated into the production.



Photo: Lawrence Peart,  
Courtesy of The University of Texas at Austin

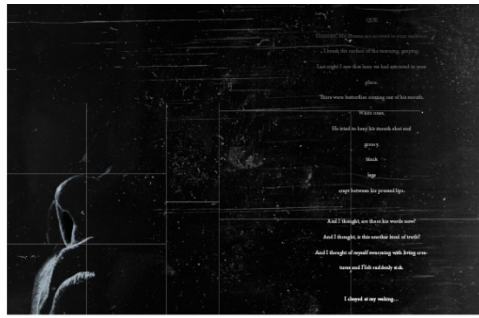


Illustration Ten: Stage vs. Art-script, Pages 32-33, 36-37



Photo: Lawrence Peart,  
Courtesy of The University of Texas at Austin

AYL  
You shouldn't be here.

FOR  
I want to discuss our marriage.

AYL  
Don't you think it's bad luck to see the bride?

*He pauses and considers this.*

FOR  
Is it? I could close my eyes.

AYL  
Yes! Yes, close your eyes.

*FOR sits on the bench and stares forward, eyes closed. AYL motions to the MAI to get her the dagger they were discussing. The MAI hesitates, but is eventually persuaded. She exits.*

AYL  
What was it you wanted to talk about?

*For the majority of the scene, FOR speaks w/ a flat affect, as if hollow inside.*

FOR  
I feel bad...for how we met. And for the way you've been treated. Force is not the purpose of power, it is power without dignity, which is a weakness.

*AYL is taken aback.*

AYL  
I see.

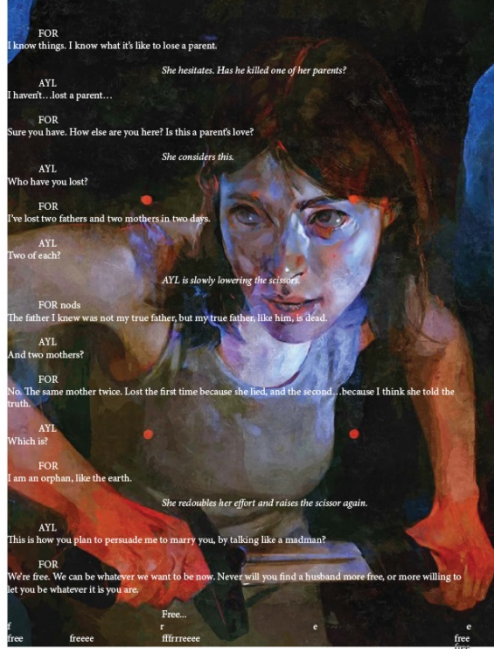
FOR  
And I apologize. I will not force you to marry me.

AYL  
Really?

FOR nods  
But...perhaps I can persuade you.

*The MAID returns with long, sharp, sewing scissors. AYL takes it and dismisses her. She stands over FOR and raises the scissors.*

AYL  
And how would you do that? You don't even know me.



FOR  
I know things. I know what it's like to lose a parent.

*She hesitates. Has he killed one of her parents?*

AYL  
I haven't...lost a parent...

FOR  
Sure you have. How else are you here? Is this a parent's love?

*She considers this.*

AYL  
Who have you lost?

FOR  
I've lost two fathers and two mothers in two days.

AYL  
Two of each?

*AYL is slowly lowering the scissors.*

FOR nods  
The father I knew was not my true father, but my true father, like him, is dead.

AYL  
And two mothers?

FOR  
No. The same mother twice. Lost the first time because she lied, and the second...because I think she told the truth.

AYL  
Which is?

FOR  
I am an orphan, like the earth.

*She redoubles her effort and raises the scissor again.*

AYL  
This is how you plan to persuade me to marry you, by talking like a madman?

FOR  
We're free. We can be whatever we want to be now. Never will you find a husband more free, or more willing to let you be whatever it is you are.

Free...  
Free  
Free  
Free  
Free

Illustration Eleven: Stage vs. Art-script, Pages 144-145

## **REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Throughout this collaborative process, I debated whether or not this art-script should be produced—performed as a traditional theatre piece. I see the act of reading this artifact as a performance. It requires the audience (reader) to actively participate in creating narrative, and each individual will have a different connection to the script. This art-script, challenges the readers traditional understanding of where narrative is generated in the first place. If a reader has no context with which to approach this text a performance will suffer. People have to be taught how to “read” this type of script and we have to further investigate how this can be taught. The creation of the art-script was a non-traditional process. Unfortunately the production, using a traditional rehearsal process, did not present this play as intended. A new method must be devised, to read, rehearse and embody this form of playwriting.

Another reason this performance was un-successful in embodying both narratives is that no designers were assigned to this show. This performance was expected to be a staged reading, a method of presenting narrative that foregrounds verbal narrative. Designers by their very nature are visual storytellers, so without them on this project, it became harder to show the visual narrative. The format, in which this show was given to be displayed, was in direct conflict with how this show was created. Our performances, attempted to put this non-traditional show into a traditional format. It struggled to create a balance between both narratives. We had a strong complete text narrative, and a weak visual narrative structure. We created a readerly and writerly text, an ideal text, but were only given a space and people to show one aspect of the doubled text.

## CONCLUSION

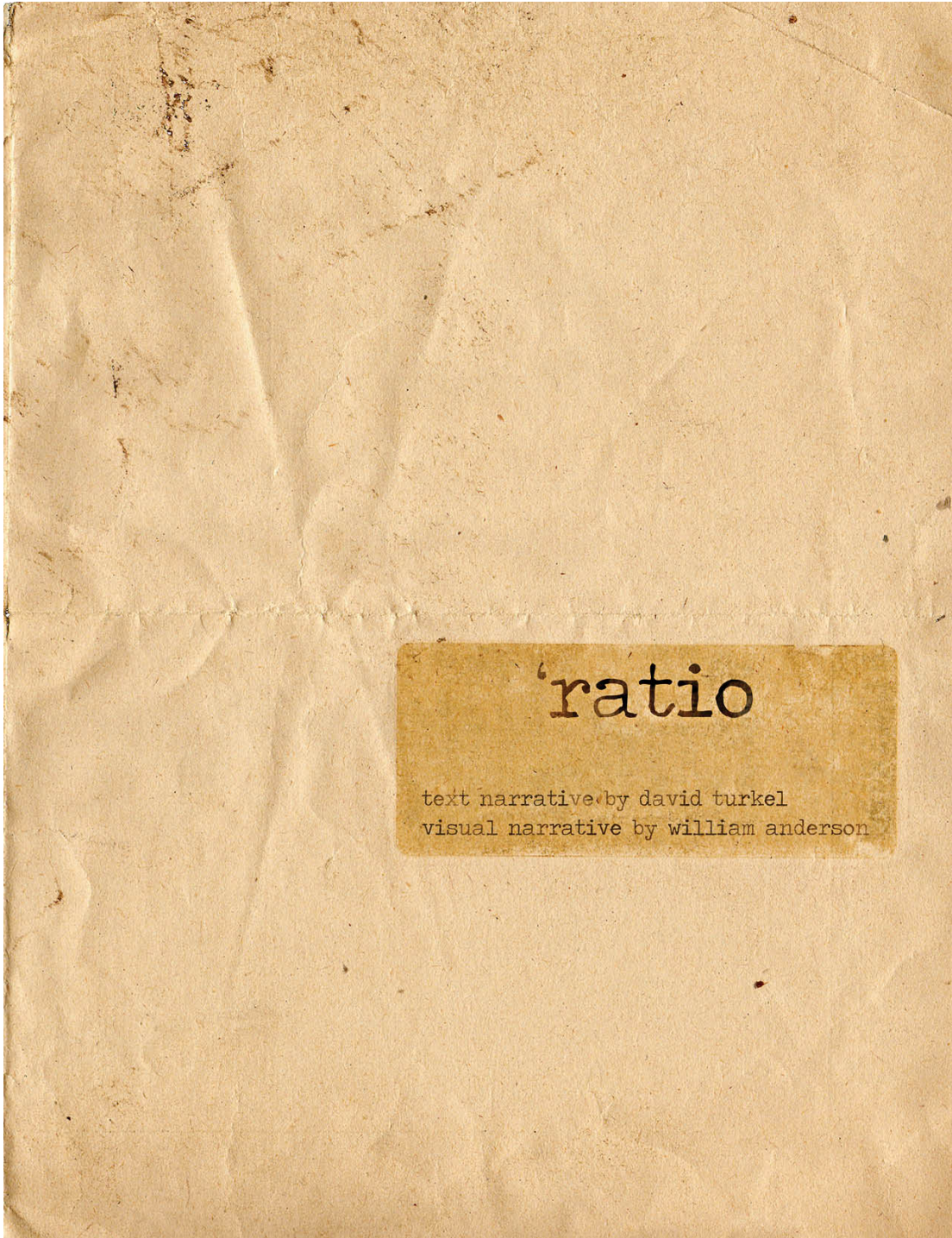
Turkel and I began this process as a playwright and a designer. I view myself as more than just a designer now, I am a narrative author. I generate the *writerly* text in every play I design to allow people to create their own narratives based around a prop, a setting, or a costume. While the visual narrative may never be in the script, it is my responsibility to generate the *writerly* narrative, through visual information. Only when both the *readerly* and *writerly* text is in collaboration, can an ideal text be created both onstage and in our art-script.

The collaboration and creation of this project was successful, in that, the art-script artifact became what Barthes would call “an ideal text.” A text that is both *readerly* and *writerly*, but the performance will require more work. Tradition methods of rehearsing and embodying a play needs to be re-examined if this new form of an ideal script can succeed.



## Appendix

### APPENDIX A: FINAL ART-SCRIPT FOR 'RATIO



*A cluttered stage - the props from another show...*

*JANITORS empty the space*

*except for*





JANITORS

Out with the old, in with the new  
 There's no new  
 Nothing?  
 Not yet  
 That's not true  
 What do you know?  
 New prisoner  
 Ha!  
 It's him, they say  
 Don't believe it  
 Where's this go?  
 In the heap, with the rest  
 You've seen him?  
 He's here  
 No...  
 Cried tears, the monster  
 Listen to me:  
 Forget  
 (Elinore, brick by brick)  
 I mean it  
 Tell no one

In another area: HORATIO - a man in his fifties, wearing a Xmas pagant board is patted down roughly by a GUARD who wears a 2nd GUARD as a puppet hand.  
 "They" tear HOR's coat off of him and a letter falls free.  
 He reaches for it and is struck thunderously hard.

The GUARD(S) shove HOR into a cell

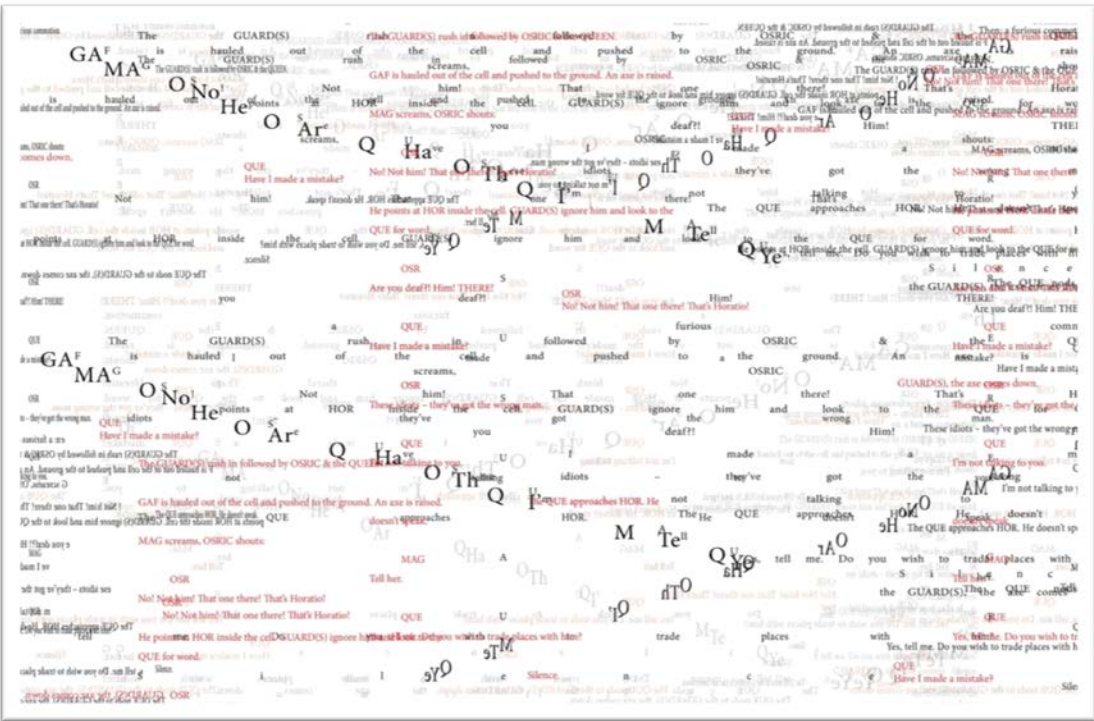


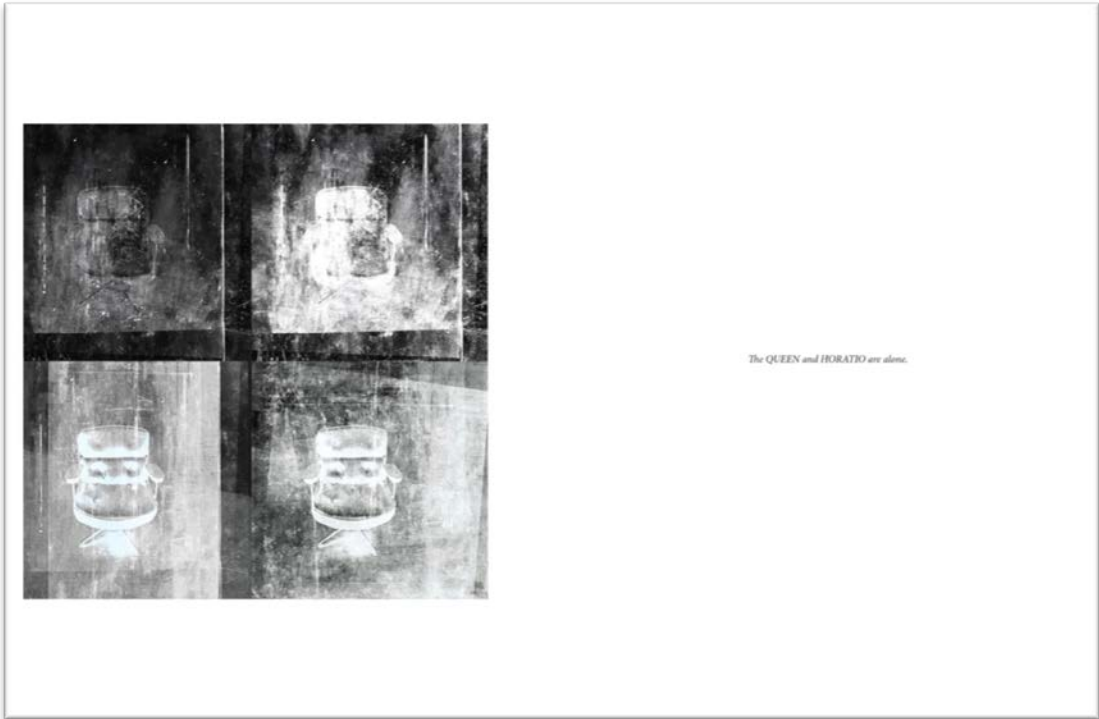
MAG: What are you in for?  
 HOR: There's been a mistake.  
 At the sound of his voice the lump of rags begins to move. It's a man. HOR recoils.  
 HOR: Who's that?  
 MAG: Can't say. Tongue's torn out.  
 HOR speaks with a German accent.  
 MAG shrugs.  
 The lump climbs HOR, emitting wretched sound.  
 The face of an OLD MAN emerges, fixing HOR with an intense stare.  
 GAF: He knows you.  
 A stick of some sort.

JANITORS tape the perimeters of the cell



Movie-time.  
A film rolls...  
A SUBTITLED FOREIGN FILM:  
INT - A SALOON: HORATIO sits w/ the OLD MAN. What language do they speak? Perhaps it's just too loud to hear them...  
HORATIO  
You've read the pages? Und?  
Short play:  
ACTOR  
It's not a play.  
HORATIO produces a knife and presses the point against the man's throat.  
ACTOR  
Whoa. Whoa.  
HORATIO  
Listen to me. I want you to use all of your powers of concentration. This is the most important role of your life. Do you hear me?  
ACTOR  
Yeah. Right.  
HORATIO  
Scratch that. It's not a role. You have to be him. Understand?  
HORATIO drops keys on the table.  
ACTOR  
The armor's there now?  
HORATIO nods. The ACTOR picks the keys.  
ACTOR  
Is it really the king's?  
HORATIO nods  
You can get it out?  
ACTOR  
My brother's wagon.  
HORATIO's hand goes back to his knife.  
HORATIO  
Your brother?  
ACTOR  
I haven't told him. Haven't. I swear. Just asked to borrow it, that's all.  
HORATIO  
If you're caught, you're a thief. None of this happened. You know that?  
ACTOR  
I understand. Believe me. I won't be caught.  
HORATIO  
You know where?  
ACTOR  
South, yeah. Past the ramparts.  
HORATIO  
You've had a look?  
The ACTOR nods.  
HORATIO  
After midnight. In the mist. If it's clear don't come out.  
ACTOR  
It's never clear.  
HORATIO  
If it's light don't risk it! You've got to come close enough to show the armor, but not too close.  
ACTOR  
We've been over this.  
HORATIO  
You can come closer the second time. I'll be there. I'll help.  
ACTOR  
And the third time he's there?  
HORATIO nods.  
ACTOR  
And we go to the stables and I do my scene. Did he write this? It's mad.  
HORATIO  
Don't say that. Don't ever say that again!  
END OF FILM





*The QUEEN and HORATIO are alone.*

QUE  
They say you were Prince Hamlet's closest friend.

HOR nods.

QUE  
But you're not from here. Rumor has it Hamlet had to explain even the simplest customs to you.

HOR  
We met at Wittenberg. At the University.

QUE  
And you claim to have been at the battle where Hamlet's father killed my husband.

HOR looks at the QUE and nods gravely.

QUE  
Stand.

He does. She puts her hands on his shoulders, measuring him against a "real" soldier.

QUE  
It's hard to picture you in battle.

HOR  
I was there.

QUE  
You understand the implications?

HOR considers, then it dawns on him:

HOR  
They think I'm from Norway?

QUE  
And that you conspired with my son, yes.

HOR  
They think I've betrayed Hamlet?

QUE  
It's an unfortunate situation your story has done little to help. Let me see if I have it right. Hamlet saw the ghost of his father in full armor and conversed with him. He wrote a play in the middle of the night and directed it. He killed an innocent man, sight unseen, and disposed of the body as if it were trash. He forged a king's signature, saw to the execution of two students, rode with pirates, dove into a grave, fought a duel, killed a king. Did I get everything?

HOR  
It's the truth.

QUE  
I'm finding it fascinating, you see, the popularity of this young man here in Denmark. Even more than popularity, the reputation, I should say. That he was wise and deliberate. Whereas my son, for lesser offenses, has made quite a different impression upon his countrymen. I assure you. Do you know my son?

HOR  
We met briefly.

QUE  
I ask you again, do you know my son?

Lights come up on a room in which a bloody Fortinbras is seated, brooding. Behind him, and pinned to the wall by a sword so that his feet dangle, is OSRIC's destroyed body.

### Anatomy of a Room

The diagram shows a simple rectangular room. The top is labeled 'Ceiling(s)', the bottom 'Floor(s)', the right side 'Wall(s)', and the left side 'Window(s)'. A 'Door(s)' is shown on the bottom wall. A sword is pinned to the right wall, with its tip pointing towards the floor. The room is drawn with perspective lines converging at the top and bottom.

HORATIO recalls. The QUEEN grabs ahold of him.

QUE  
What?! What is it? Tell me what you're seeing now that you haven't seen in Hamlet's company?

HOR  
...

She pushes him forcefully into a chair. FORTINBRAS smirks.

QUE  
Nothing from you.

To HORATIO:

QUE  
I want to know what the difference between my son and Hamlet is. I want you to tell me the difference. I have a theory I'll share: I believe it's you. Am I wrong?

HOR  
Your highness?

QUE  
He was as brazen, cruel, indiscipherable. But for you, it seems - from all reports - a mild-mannered scholar. He wore you like a costume. Is that it?

HOR  
No.

QUE  
How did you manage to sheath that calamity?

HOR  
I didn't?

QUE  
No?

HOR  
I swear.

QUE  
Then I'm wrong. I have no use for you. Guards!

GUARDS enter.

HOR  
Uh...  
of course,  
I did.....  
counsel him

QUE  
Did you?

HOR  
Yes...of course, I

QUE  
And what counsel would you give now, were he here in my son's place?

HOR  
Your highness?

QUE  
Prove your worth to me or to the worms. It's your choice.

HOR  
I would tell him...that he needs to present a united front. The, uh...the the...

QUE  
Yes?

HOR  
Your son's soldiers are generating a certain enmity here and und und

QUE  
How do you know this?

HOR  
There's a rumor

QUE  
A rumor?

That's what you base this on?

Not from the countless signs of their nightly debauchery? Not the shrieks of the multitude accosted, the daily positioning of angry merchants and farmers; the battle lines that I can see even now from this window, between the Danish army and my son's drunken mercenaries, drawn like two rails of gunpowder awaiting a spark? Not that!

To GUARDS:

QUE  
I've made a mistake.

*They seize HOR and begin to haul him away.*

HOR  
There's insurgent troops, your highness – Laertes men. They are the larger concern.

*The QUE hurls them.*

QUE  
Laertes? The young man Hamlet fought the duel with?

HOR  
He organized an army in a bid for the throne. They have held...and I think...grown stronger....

QUE  
How do you know this?

HOR  
The royal army – as you've undoubtedly noticed from your window – decreases nightly. They are joining Laertes men...

QUE  
What are they waiting on?

HOR  
Word from Oric, their emissary, I would guess.

QUE  
And who is that?

HOR  
The stain.

*HOR points to the suspended body.*

QUE  
Hm. And your counsel in this matter?

HOR  
It's well known that Laertes drew these troops largely from the Skåne – his father's country.

QUE  
His father...Polonius?

HOR  
A fool, granted. But, the Skåne is key to a united Denmark. Polonius had a brother, Corambis, who wields a great deal of influence there. He'll be mit these troops.

QUE  
How is that information of use to us?

HOR  
Corambis has a daughter of marrying age.

*The QUE weighs this.*



QUE  
It was my son's desire to have you executed. But I think this is better. Don't you agree?

HOR  
Do you think the people will believe it's my head on that gate?

QUE  
It's remarkable how much the face changes once the spark of life is gone. A bearded head bearing your name – that's all that matters. Besides, who here even knows what you look like?

HOR  
The palace guards.

QUE  
Who living?

OPHELIA

sits

humming

and working

in

a land

with

an

uninterrupted

breath

*MAG and the OLD MAN sit huddled in their cell.*

*HORATIO enters, bearing gifts.*

*MAG spits.*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>MAG<br/>What do you want?</p> <p>HOR<br/>I...I've brought you...some things.</p> <p>HOR<br/>Clean clothes. Soup?</p> <p>HOR<br/>I wear.</p> | <p><i>He offers blankets. They are not taken.</i></p> <p><i>He sits them down.</i></p> <p><i>Again, the soup is not taken, but when he sets it down, the OLD MAN picks the bowl up gruffly.</i></p> |
|--|---|

*The OLD MAN smashes the bowl to the floor.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>MAG<br/>He was a priest. Did you know that? The man they killed?</p> <p>HOR<br/>What could I do?</p> <p>MAG<br/>Tell us what you want.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>HOR looks at the OLD MAN.</i></p> <p>HOR<br/>I have to talk with him.</p> <p>MAG<br/>Good luck.</p> | <p>HOR<br/>He doesn't need his tongue to answer.</p> <p>MAG<br/>Why should he listen to you?</p> <p>HOR<br/>It's important.</p> <p>MAG<br/>To you or to him?</p> <p>HOR<br/>Please, it may not be my head on the gate, but it's my name. People cheered.</p> |
|---|--|

MAG  
I heard.

*From a great distance off, GAF slowly approaches OPHELIA.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>MAG<br/>How can he change that?</p> <p>HOR<br/>I have a question only he can answer.</p> <p>MAG<br/>You do know him.</p> <p>HOR<br/>He was an actor. I loved him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>HOR turns to the OLD MAN.</i></p> <p>HOR<br/>I need to know about the last time you saw Hamlet.</p> <p>MAG<br/>And what do we get? Soup and blankets?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To OLD MAN:</i></p> <p>Fuck him, Death listen.</p> <p>HOR<br/>What else can I do?</p> <p>MAG<br/>Get us out.</p> <p>HOR<br/>You overestimate my influence.</p> <p>MAG<br/>You must have something they want.</p> |  |
|---|--|

*Moths rise up around OPHELIA as GAF nears.*







QUE  
It's a strange name.

HOR  
It was given to me.

QUE  
Obviously.

HOR  
It was Hamlet gave it.

QUE  
Which he named you like a pet?

HOR  
We were discussing Horatian satire and I told him the story of Saturnalia—  
a day in ancient Rome when servants were permitted to speak the truth to their masters.  
After that, he called me Horatio, meaning that I was always permitted to speak my mind to him.

QUE  
Meaning that you were his servant, is how I would take it. At any rate you're going to need a new name.

HOR *modi agere*

QUE  
You are dismissed.

GUARD(S) *enter*

HOR: There is...one other thing, your highness. When I told you that I was at the battle where King Hamlet defeated your husband...

QUE: Yes?

HOR: That's not entirely true.

*She dismisses the GUARDS.*

QUE: Go on.

HOR: There was, in fact...no battle that day. The two kings fought man to man.

QUE: That's not news. Everyone knows that.

HOR: Of course. Still, it was most surprising to those of us who were there that your husband would make such a challenge. King Hamlet was almost twice his size.

QUE: Men being men, I suppose.

HOR: It sticks mit me.

QUE: You have another theory?

HOR: There are simply not that many things which would make a man behave in such a way. It was...almost as if he was defending his honor.

*The QUEEN and HORATIO hold one another's gaze for a long moment.*

HOR: People out there are grasping at the straws right now. It might not take too much to raise a question as to your son's...paternity.

*A long pause presided over by the QUEEN's furious gaze.*

Then:

QUE: A legitimate heir to the throne?

HOR: He does...love King Hamlet. In stature.

*The QUEEN looks at him closely.*

QUE: All this from a shave?

*HOR smiles.*

HOR: There's one more thing, your highness.

*The QUEEN looks handless.*

HOR: I think that the prisoners should be released.

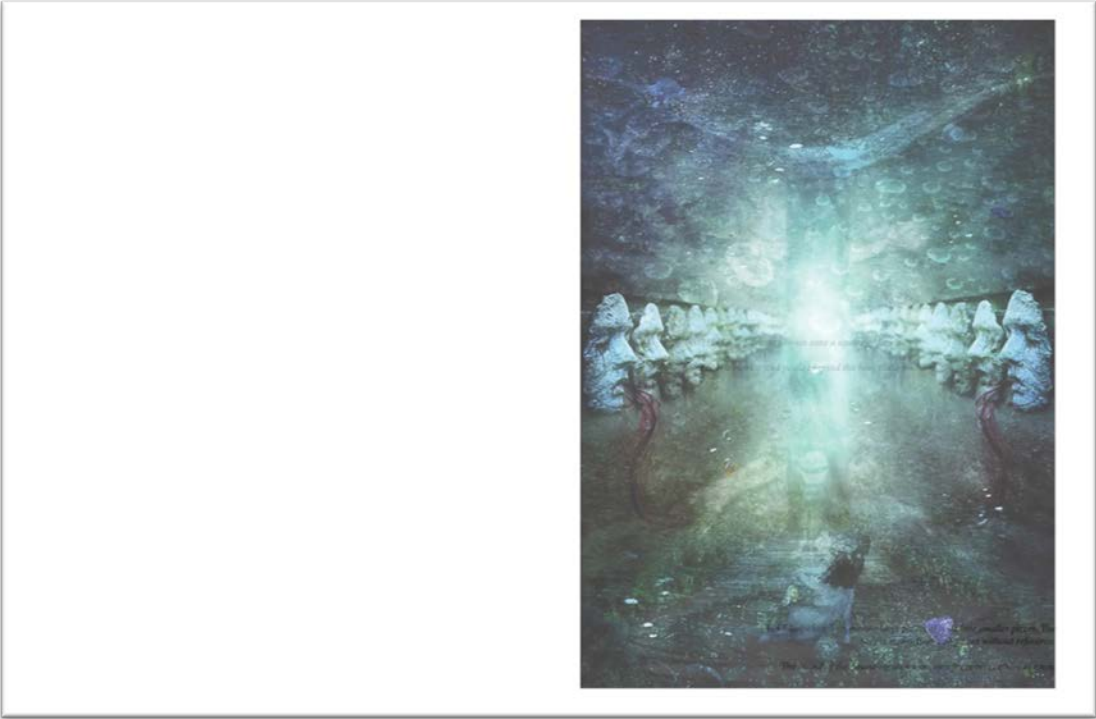
*She waits.*

HOR: It says that your son is thoughtful and complicated. Their offenses are not against him, however grievous they may be. It says that he's considering everything, even the lowest, the invisible. Besides, they are no threat. One is an old mate and the other...

QUE: The woman?

*The QUEEN smiles at HOR indulgently.*

QUE: I see. As you wish. Now it seems I have difficult news to deliver.



Next:

*HORATIO sits with FORTINBRAS. The latter is twice his size - slow, ponderous bulk.*

*There's another dead servant, a bloody lamp at their feet.*

*A JANITOR feverishly scrubs while trying to remain invisible.*

FOR  
I don't understand. Explain it again.

HOR  
I've told you everything I know.

FOR  
Are you calling me stupid?

HOR  
No, of course not. It's just...

FOR  
Yet, you understand. That's what you're saying. And here we hold the same information between us. Because you've told me everything you know. So you say. But, here I am, unable to feed, and there you are waving at me from the other side of the creek.

HOR  
Perhaps I'm doing an inadequate job of explaining.

FOR  
THAT IS WHY I ASKED YOU TO EXPLAIN IT AGAIN. You say he was poisoned?

HOR  
Ja.

FOR  
So the ghost said. He was sleeping in his garden when a serpent entered.

HOR  
Ja.

FOR  
How did he know it had entered if he was sleeping?

HOR  
Perhaps, he was awoken by his agony?

FOR  
The poison was poured into his ear and he awoke from the agony and saw the serpent?

HOR  
Ja.

FOR  
Entering? Surely he had to enter before he could pour the poison.

HOR  
Will...perhaps he

FOR  
And how does a serpent pour poison? With no hands, I mean?

HOR  
The serpent is meant to be his brother.

FOR  
It's language?

HOR  
Ja.

FOR  
His brother? Claudius?

HOR  
Ja.

FOR  
Entered the garden when he was sleeping and poured poison into his ear. And his skin turned to bark. Language again?

HOR  
I think so, ja.

FOR  
HIS SKIN AS YOU SAW IT AT THE FUNERAL, WAS IT BARK?

HOR  
No, your highness, it wasn't.

FOR  
Language then. So, a serpent and a tree and a garden... This is the story that the ghost told to my...brother?

HOR  
Half, half-brother. Ja.

*He weighs this information.*

*Nods.*

*Points to the slaughtered body at his feet.*

FOR  
I asked this man,  
"asked"  
"asked"  
"asked"

I asked him for his opinion of old King Hamlet. And he talked of him as if he were a pig.

But

HE WAS MY FATHER! I've just discovered. And either that man was telling me only what he thought I wanted to hear. Or, he had no respect for my father. It's not pointless, what I did. I am not pointless. I am not graceful. I am not a natural pleaser. I am going through a difficult period. I have lived in the dark. All these years. And my mother... Well, she couldn't tell me before now. Could she? Could she?

*HORATIO is at a loss for what to say.*

FOR  
Philosophize!

HOR  
Um...  
Um...  
Um...  
Um...

*FORTINBRAS stands abruptly, his chair tumbling behind him from the force.*

FOR  
I'm waiting.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>HORATIO</p> <p>Your mother would not have been able to talk about it. No, I don't believe. Not while Getrude was still alive.</p> <p>When King Hamlet - your...father, I mean - was hit her it would have only caused discord. Und, after he passed</p> <p>Ja, that's right</p> <p>Ja. Murdered. Most definitely. Und mit that your mother lost the only person who could have corroborated her story</p> <p>Her account, I mean - uh, the...only other person in the world who knew the truth!</p> <p>Two reasons.</p> <p>It would have given you cause to challenge the throne here, while at the same time revealing to you your deep kinship to Prince Hamlet - something he couldn't possibly share - und therefore it would have put you at a disadvantage</p> <p>Exactly!</p> <p><i>HOR slumps in relief and exhaustion.</i></p> <p>Sorry?</p> <p>—</p> <p>No.</p> <p>He, uh...</p> <p>Ja, that's right.</p> <p>I thought so, ja.</p> <p>I did.</p> <p>Nein, no -</p> <p>To stop him.</p> <p>Because...well, we didn't have the proof.</p> <p>For the people. It would have looked...</p> <p>Not exactly. You see, it turned out...well, that he wasn't going after Claudius at all. I was... mistaken.</p> <p>He uh...</p> <p>There was this girl</p> <p><i>Crude laughter from FOR.</i> And he uh...he climbed into her window...</p> <p><i>HOR looks troubled, remembering the moment.</i></p> | <p>FORTINBRAS</p> <p>That's right.</p> <p>Was murdered, you mean</p> <p>That's what the ghost said</p> <p>Story?</p> <p>Yes. But, me, me - why couldn't she have told me?</p> <p>Good. What are they?</p> <p>Because he was my brother? And I would have been fighting my own brother? But he wouldn't have known that we were brothers and so...I would have been...fighting myself and him....</p> <p>And that's why she couldn't tell me. L...L...L...I understand.</p> <p><i>HOR slumps in relief and exhaustion.</i></p> <p>And then what?</p> <p>What did my brother do then? After he spoke to the ghost. Is that when he stabbed the fat man?</p> <p>The one behind the curtains that he mistook for Claudius.</p> <p>What then?</p> <p>You say he raced off.</p> <p>To kill the king?</p> <p>And you followed after?</p> <p>To help him kill the king?</p> <p>What then?</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>You had the ghost</p> <p>And that's why he hesitated? Because you stopped him</p> <p>Where did he go?</p> <p>WHERE?</p> <p>My brother!</p> <p><i>Crude laughter from FOR.</i></p> <p><i>HOR looks troubled, remembering the moment.</i></p> |
|---|--|

And then

FOR  
Do you think she was raped?

*HOR looks shocked.*

HOR  
NO. Of course not.

FOR  
You mean you think she...wanted it?

HOR  
What?

FOR  
My mother.

HOR  
---

*FORTINBRAS stands and paces.*

FOR  
It's odd. I've never thought of my mother's sex before. She was just my mother. Just only my mother and nothing else. Not even my father's wife. But now I see her. I see...AHHH! And all of this before me, before I ever. And then there was...something...some flash...and then there was L...growing like a...in her guts! AHHH! It makes me...dizzy. I can't decide what's worse. If she was attacked, or...if she liked it. And I was just the random chance of her...squealing pleasure. Of her...shrieking...copulation. Like millions of others. Just...falling through time... just blinking in the sky...just to catch a glimpse for a second and then...in the black again! What was it that I thought before I thought this? What was it that I thought before I knew that I thought this was true? I can't even remember. I can't even remember two days ago. Did I think I was immortal? Did I think I was the only actual living thing on the planet? Did I think that I think I did. Is this better? Well, if I'm not alone...that, that could be better. But, then - AHHH! - if the others are real, then I've done such horrible...such horrible, dreadful things. If I am not alone, if the world does not exist for my pleasure, then it could be that it is pointless. That is like a dream. If I am not alone and the world is not pointless, then it must be that there is a god. And that is a nightmare that I cannot wake from. If I am not god, then I am the lowest sinner. I am better off with the devil. But how am I to be certain. And, in the meantime, how am I to live? And why not die now, or just...fuck it all. Fuck it. Live. AHHH!

*GUARD(S) arrive with the OLD MAN and MAG.  
HOR approaches. FOR looks up then joins them.*

GUA to HOR  
Your fifth, "six"

FOR  
What do you say?

HOR  
He, uh

FOR  
WHAT DO YOU SAY, SLAVE?

HOR  
Your highness! He can't! He can't say!

FOR  
What?

HOR  
He's not being...impudent. He's, uh...he's mute.

FOR  
Show.

*The OLD MAN opens his mouth wide. FORTINBRAS peers inside.*

FOR  
Abbbb...

TO HOR:  
What use is he?

HOR  
The uh...the perfect servant, your highness.

FOR  
Perfect? He's as broken as my mother's marriage bed.

HOR  
Ja, but, he uh...he can't talk.

*FORTINBRAS laughs heartily at this. He sits, enjoying this joke.*



*HOR leans over the OLD MAN.*

*The OLD MAN begins to shake.*

FOR  
Abbb...No, no that is, that is perfect...no talking...

*He turns his attention to MAG.*

FOR  
And this one? She serves you, too?

*MAG tries to communicate something with her eyes, but HOR misunderstands.*

HOR  
No, she's

*She shoots daggers.*

HOR  
I mean, she--

FOR  
Good. Then you've no objections.

*FOR hurls MAG suddenly into the air and exits.*

*The OLD MAN looks at HOR with renewed disgust.*

MEANWHILE: Outside

CORAMBIS and his younger daughter, ATLA, confer.

COR  
You know what to do?  
COR  
Did your mother tell you?  
COR  
How to woo?

ATL  
What to do?  
ATL  
Tell me what!  
ATL  
Woo?



Ingenuity. Honda combined the practical Civic Hatchback with a 12-valve, 1.5 liter engine that uses our racing-inspired fuel-injection system. Honda's timed-sequential, multi-port Programmed Fuel Injection uses a series of sensors and a digital computer. The computer determines the engine's exact fuel requirements and signals injectors to deliver the precise amount of fuel at

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The Civic Si

COR  
Now remember, he's a prince, but he's still...just a man. You understand?

ATL  
I...guess...

COR  
Don't get me wrong - he's a man, yes, yes, a man, but he's still...

ATL  
...a prince?

COR  
Exactly! Even a king, I suppose! Prince of Norway, king here.

ATL  
But, I thought we were going to challenge him?

COR  
Shh! That's the problem with your sex - no politics. Think to challenge means to fight and who's to say that we win? And even if we do, if we win, still who's to say that we - you or I - survive? And even if we do, if we're still standing victorious at the end, then who says - politics being what they are in our class - that our family is any better off for it. He! But here, with this arrangement, do you see? - one simple transaction - not only do we spare the fight, but...we are crowned!

ATL  
Is it simple?

COR  
Really, has your mother told you nothing?

ATL  
"Keep your knees together."

COR  
Yes, well...that has its place. But, about the finer arts? Has she not taught you...how to throw a glance, for instance?

ATL  
Throw a glance?

COR  
Oh, how to catch light in your hair? Or...to make your eyes smolder?

ATL  
What?

COR  
Is it innate, I wonder? Are you born with these machinations? Do something. Try one.

ATL  
I don't understand.

COR  
Try!

ATL  
What?

COR  
Toss your head!

*She stares at him in horror.*

COR  
Listen to me.

It's important that you remember that a man, if he be a man of a certain age, inheriting, or so he imagines, his body in a single season, and considering it somehow apart from himself, halves the difference between his head and his constituent parts thusly: contemplating his heart in his throat and his loins in his heart, so that he funds into airy spirit a rudeness born in the blood, and, though he imagines his brain captain, it is his rudder steers the ship.

Do you understand?

Or not!!

*HORATIO takes a pen and paper and tries to hand them to the OLD MAN.*

HOR  
That night in the barn, I paid you what we owed. That's all I know. What happened after? You met mit Hamlet again, in his mother's room, ja? It's alright, he told me. It's just...I'm confused about a couple of things. He said she couldn't see you. Why would he hire you and then keep you hidden? It doesn't make sense.

*The OLD MAN reaches for the pen, finally.*

HOR  
Something went wrong. Is that it?

*The OLD MAN takes the pen and stabs HOR in the eye with it.*

*They struggle.*

*HOR pins him.*

HOR  
Stop it! For godsake! What's wrong mit you? The king was murdered, you understand!! We needed to set things right. That's what you were for. Not a lie - a different kind of truth! A symbol! But that night everything went wrong. That night in his mother's room. There was another man there. Hiding. Is that why you couldn't reveal yourself? What do you mean you don't know? Polonius - The man Hamlet killed! ANSWER ME! YOU WERE THERE, FOR GODSAKE!

*OLD MAN shakes his head no. HOR stares at him, his world clicking into place and falling apart in quick succession.*

HOR  
Ja, ja, you were there. He saw you. He told me...how he talked to you. The things you said. But, for some reason...she couldn't hear. Couldn't see... You have no idea what I'm talking about. He saw an actual ghost? Is that what you're saying? Of course not. Then what? He was...mad? Is that what you mean? But, when did it start? And how many parts madness? This, I mean—

*HOR gestures to the OLD MAN's mouth -*

HOR  
Did he do this to you?

*The OLD MAN looks at him with a dead blank stare.*

*There is a loud knock at the door.*

*HOR and the OLD MAN stop and stare at the door.*

*The knocking repeats.*

*The GUARD(S) and answer it.*

COR & AYL enter.

*HOR steps forward bleeding from the eye.*

*The sounds of a passionate encounter echo through the halls.*

*COR is quite shocked, AYL puzzled.*

COR  
I...I was under the impression we would be meeting the prince.

AYL  
And Oeric.

*The QUE enters, walking gingerly, cotton balls between her toes.*

*Apparently her guests are early.*

HOR  
I'm, uh...Virgil, sir, the prince's counsel.

COR  
I thought Oeric was the prince's counsel?

*AYLA whispers and buries her face in her father's arm. He holds her.*

COR to AYL  
Then, there. Everything's fine.

To HOR  
Where is Oeric?

HOR  
Mit the prince, sir. Counseling.

COR  
Then who are you?

*The intimate noises continue, grading into dridks.*

*The group plods on.*

QUE  
Virgil?

HOR  
The prince...values my opinion, that's all you need to know.

*A scream offstage. MAG is heard.*

MAG (off)  
AHHH! What's that?

FOR (off)  
What?!

MAG (off)  
You've lost your mind!

FOR (off)  
What?!

They appear.

FOR  
It's a position!

MAG  
It's not!

FOR  
Yes!

MAG  
I would know! A position?!

FOR  
It is!

MAG  
Not one you could do more than once, I would think.

FOR  
Well...

FORTINBRAS turns and sees the group. His eyes fall on AYL.

FOR  
Is this her?

HOR  
Ja.

COR  
We're going.

FOR  
Ey! Not so fast!



*CORAMBRIS takes his daughter's arm.*

COR  
Walk quickly.

FOR  
Stop, I said!

MAG  
Her what?

FOR  
A wife.

COR  
I don't think so.

MAG  
This thing? You can't be serious.

QUE to HOR:  
Are you going to do something?

FOR  
What's wrong with her?

MAG  
You'd split her in half!

*FORTINBRAS plans a revolt, but just starts laughing.*

FOR  
I like you.

*FORTINBRAS and MAG make out.  
The COR and ATLA begin to rush for the exit. The QUEEN takes HORATIO'S arm.*

QUE  
You can't let them leave.

HOR  
Your highness!

QUE  
Not like this. This is not the impression that we discussed.

COR  
It's just a misunderstanding. There's been no offense. I assure you.


HOR  
I'm sorry. She's right.

*COR and ATLA try to run. HORATIO turns to the GUARDS!*

HOR  
Stop them.



*the OLD MAN trying to find them*



crackers, crackers,  
crackers, crackers,  
crackers, crackers,  
crackers, crackers.

fish fish fish  
fish fish fish  
fish fish fish  
fish fish fish


Gol  
Gol  
Gol  
den

*CORAMBS and AYL A are held*

*but unable to open the bag*

*QUEEN and HORATIO watch him, sipping Starbucks.  
HOR wears an eye-patch.*

QUE  
They'll starve to death at this rate.



COR  
Push some things... away... please...

COR  
Let us out!

HOR  
I don't know what to do with them.

HOR  
In so many ways this is worse. If people just start disappearing into the castle. How does that look?

QUE  
They could travel. It wouldn't be out of the realm.

HOR  
Travel? Where to?

QUE  
To the Sklone. To survey the gentleman's holdings. It would be crazy, but it wouldn't be out of the realm to shop them.

HOR  
It might be good for your son to travel...

QUE  
He wouldn't actually travel? You understand? Not actually!


HOR  
Oh. No, of course not.

QUE  
We would merely announce that he'd been invited to the gentleman's estate. Where, perhaps, an accident might befall him... a hunting accident...

HOR  
Your son?

QUE  
Corambis!

---



COR  
Not NO! They'll wear in my absence! It hangs on my sword!

HOR  
What about the girl?

QUE  
I don't know! Why am I doing this? It's your job. I asked you if you could do for my son what you did for Prince Hamlet and you said that you could. Do you remember?

HOR  
Ja. Und I can.

QUE  
You asked for the prisoners to be released and now one of them is filthying his bed. You recommended marriage and now his best prospect is picking crumbs off a dirty floor. Is this your idea of embellishing him with some measured civility? With an ethic of rational discourse?!

HOR  
Well, Hamlet was...for all his faults...still not without certain qualities.

QUE  
Is my son without qualities?

HOR  
No. But, I've been thinking...

FOR  
Yes?

Silence

FOR  
You've been thinking about me. What exactly? How to handle me? How to make me more like Hamlet?

Is that what she wants? The...fornicator.

QUE  
O, would you stop it.

FOR  
You'd like that, wouldn't you? How like Hamlet if I just...died. Why are you even here? I HAD EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL.

QUE  
What did you have under control?

FOR  
THIS.

QUE  
The country?

FOR  
Do you think it's impressive just because you do it?

FOR takes the bag from the OLD MAN and tears it open. He eats and throws crackers at COR.

FOR  
People want to be ruled. They'd rather pay their taxes than have their...balls cut off. It's not hard. Look at this place. It's been standing for a hundred years, I bet. You haven't been here the whole time, have you?

He shouts into the grate again.

FOR  
WELL, HAS SHE? TELL HER.

You like being ruled, don't you?

You like little fishes...

FOR holds out a handful of crackers to COR, but as they're taken, FOR suddenly seizes COR and attempts to fit his entire hand into the main mouth.

FOR LITTLE DISSENS. E PRO  
OF/BEING SHOWN A M TIME TO TIME!

We hear sounds of pain and anguish from the cage as FOR works his hands violently inside.

QUE  
Stop that! Stop it! Would you? QUIT IT! QUIT IT, I SAID!

FOR releases COR.

QUE  
What is wrong with you?

FOR  
Nothing's wrong with me. I'm just making a point. My men got a taste for blood in Poland. They'll drink it up here too.

QUE  
You're impossible.

HOR  
Were you...victorious in Poland?

FOR shrugs

We were contesting a scrap of land barely worth fighting over. Don't know why my uncle even sent me after it in the first place.

HOR  
Perhaps he didn't.

FOR  
I just said that he did.

HOR  
I'm only saying, perhaps he didn't send you to Poland.

FOR  
AND I'M TELLING YOU--

HOR  
Perhaps he was merely sending you...out of Norway.

FOR  
--

HOR  
I'm only thinking aloud. Did he give you his best regiment?

FOR  
No. It wasn't about that.

HOR  
What was it about?

FOR  
I was to teach war to...

HOR  
Ja!

FOR  
To...the untested recruits.

QUE to HOR:  
What are you doing?

FOR  
He's trying to get me out of the way. Is that it? Is that what you're saying? What am I? An embarrassment?

HOR  
Or perhaps...a threat?

QUE  
For goshake?!

FOR  
Is that what he thinks?

HOR  
Imagine the threat you could be mit a whole country behind you. If you stopped treating these people like your enemy. If you were to be a true king to them. Not everyone in the world is your enemy.

A long pause as the QUE and HOR watch FOR consider this.

FOR  
I am their king.

HOR is unconvinced.

FOR  
What do they want - a parade?

HOR  
It's not a bad start.

FOR looks at HOR.

FOR  
A...parade? Me?

HOR  
If they can't see you, how can they love you?

FOR  
...Love...me?



*The QUEEN lies awake, Montaigne's ESSAIS face down on her lap, staring at her thumbs. She sips a glass of wine.*

*HOR wanders in.*

QUE  
Can't you sleep either?

HOR  
It's not the sleep that's difficult. There's this girl I keep seeing whenever I close my eyes...

QUE  
Keep your nightmares to yourself. I have my own.

*The sounds of fucking echo through the halls.*

*JANITORS push mop buckets past.*

QUE  
Sound in this place, my god - it's like an eardrum.

HOR  
Your son is a man of...great appetite.

QUE  
You were good with him today.

*The QUEEN pours a glass of wine for HOR.*

QUE  
Do you know I sat in this very room talking to Claudius about our plans to send him to Poland. We needed permission, of course, to march an army through. Claudius and I had a lot in common, actually. We'd both spent time in the...shadow of his brother, so to speak.

*They exchange a meaningful look.*

QUE  
And both of us lived with the same fear - that these young boys of his would one day become kings themselves. That's my nightmare. Can you imagine?

HOR  
It was my dream to see Hamlet crowned.

QUE  
I know. That's why you're useful. You possess a certain idealism I lack. Actually, that's not true - idealism isn't a quality one can possess, I don't think. It's more the absence of qualities. Experience, for starters. But, perhaps you're right. He needs to be seen as a king before he can see himself that way. He won't rise to it. He must be lifted.

*MAG enters wearing only a shirt and slowly crosses the stage.  
She moves on shaky legs like she's been running a marathon.*

*The two stop and watch her in silence.*

*She retrieves a bottled water.*

*She slowly crosses back in the direction from whence she came.*



*The following morning, HOR eats a bowl of cereal.*

*FOR enters dressed in blasted finery. He holds up a kingly garment - an ermine cape or something. The OLD MAN attends him.*

FOR  
Where's my father's armor?

*HOR spit-takes Cheerios.*

HOR  
His armor?

FOR  
He's right. I should be wearing it. Not this...this buffoonery...

*The OLD MAN fidgets. HOR eyes him suspiciously.*

HOR  
That's what he said?

FOR  
Course not. We play charades. He's quite good. Used to be an actor. Played a king. He's been telling me about it all morning.

HOR  
Has he?

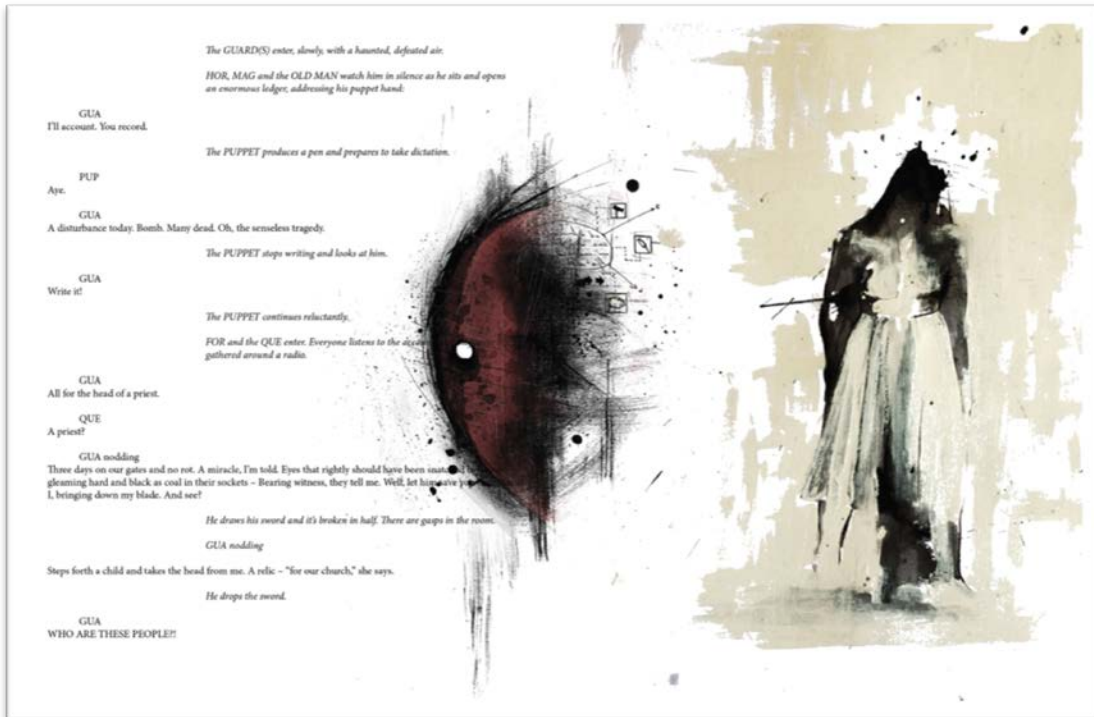
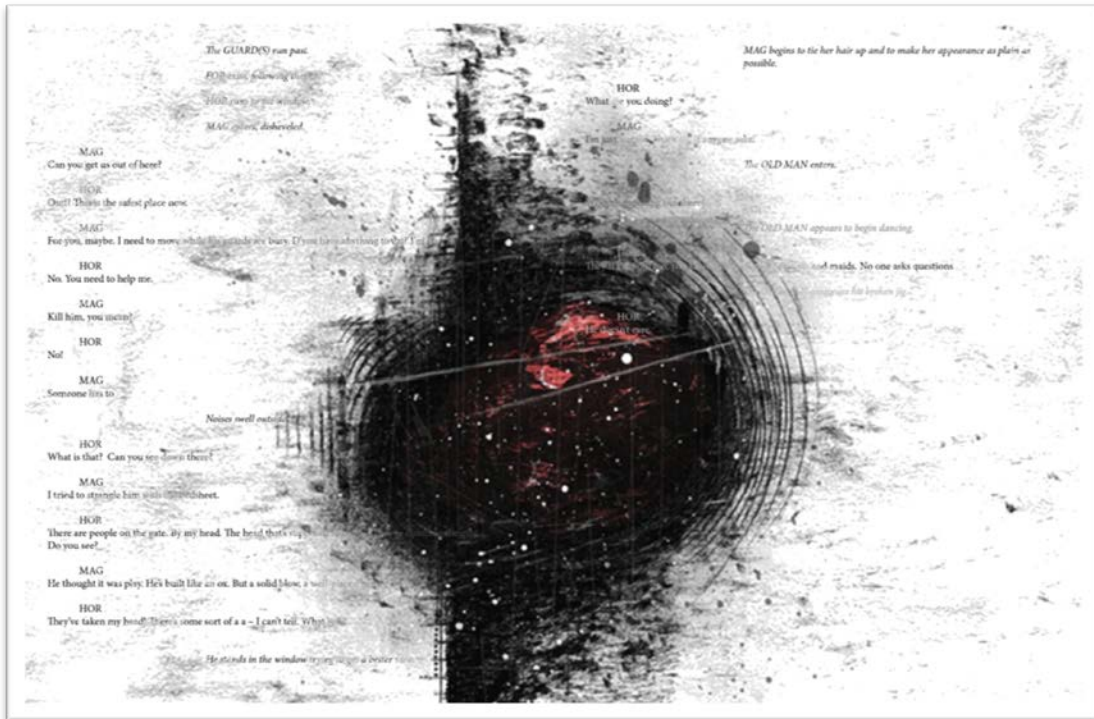
FOR  
MY FATHER'S ARMOR! Fetch it!

HOR  
For a parade?

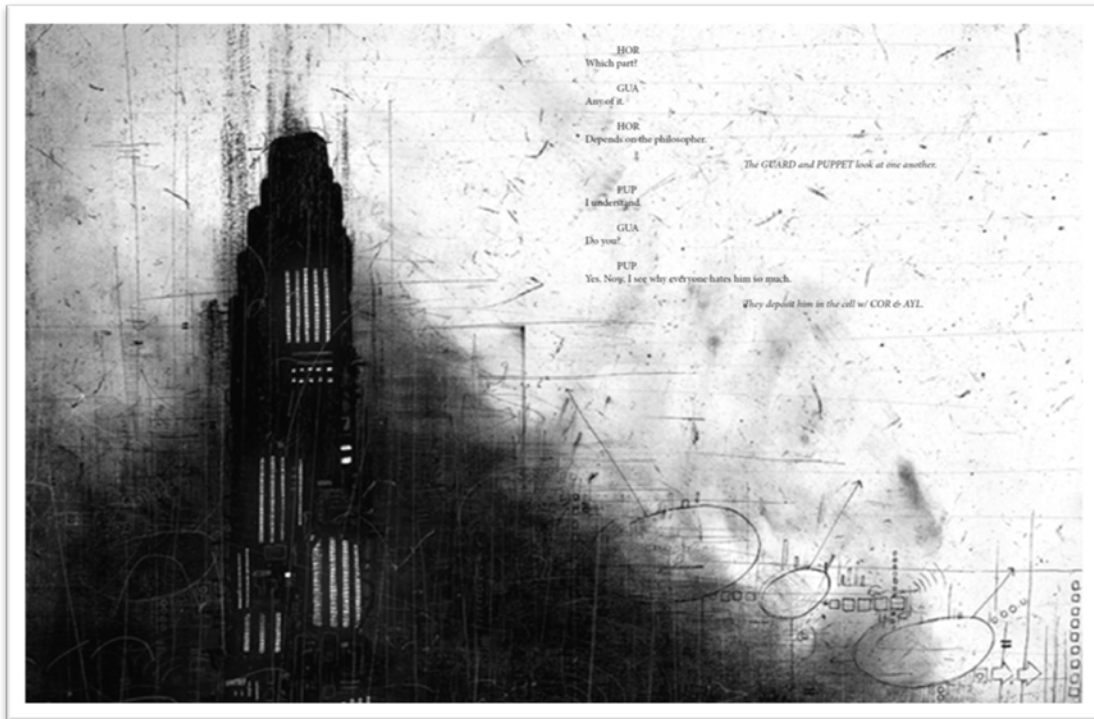
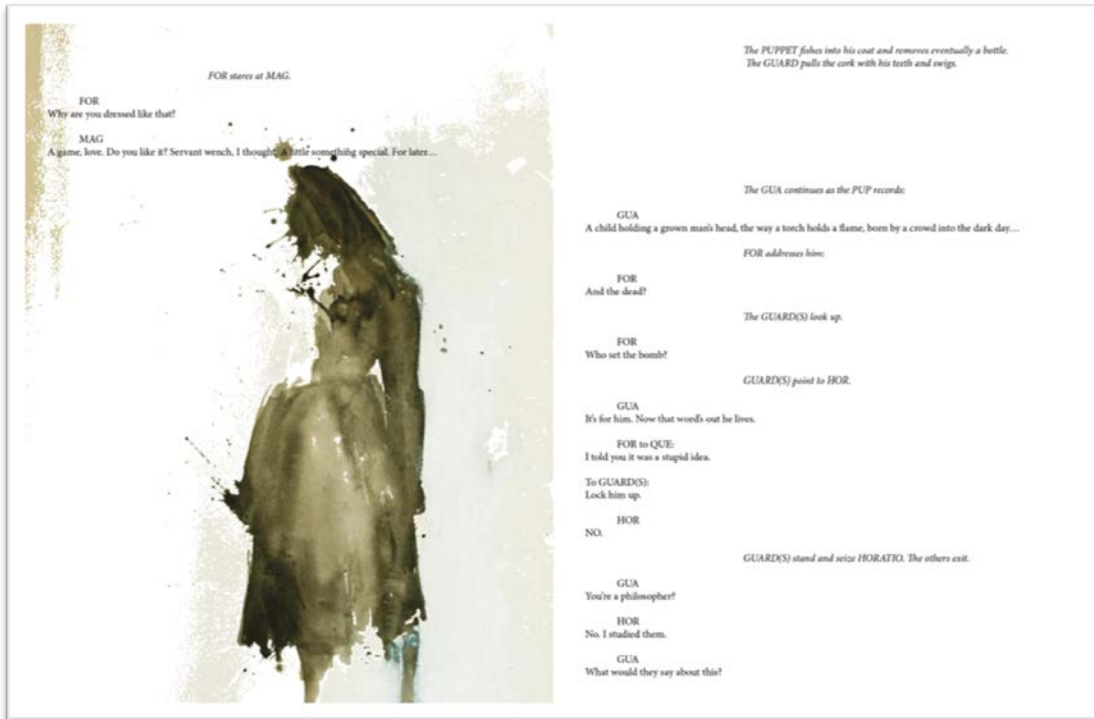
FOR  
I can't be seen like this. It's ridiculous, these clothes. Let the people see a fearsome king.

HOR  
People run from what they fear. They only follow that which they love.

*The sound of an enormous explosion shakes the room.*







The sounds of MAG & FOR at it again, echoing through a grate in the wall.

### The porn cannot be displayed

The porn you are looking for is currently unavailable. The Web site might be experiencing technical difficulties, or your cramped, sticky fingers may have typed in the wrong URL.

Please try the following:

- Click the  **Refresh** button, or take a cold shower and try again later.
- If you typed the page address in the Address bar, make sure that it is spelled correctly, as excessive masturbation is known to affect vision.
- To check your connection settings, click the **Tools** menu, and then click **Internet Options**. On the **General** tab, click **Settings**. Then click **View Files** and delete all those cookies from the sex sites you have been leering at before your local area network (LAN) administrator, boss, spouse, children, parents, or significant other discovers what a pathetic little pervert you are.
- If your Network Administrator has enabled it, Microsoft Windows can examine your network and automatically discover dirty pictures. If you would like Windows to try and discover them, click  **Detect Dirty Pictures**.
- Some porn sites require money. It is recommended to use someone else's credit card, but for that kind of jack, it's probably cheaper to drag your pale, pasty carcass to a nude bar and look at real sluts. **WARNING-There is NO sex in the Champagne Room.**
- If you are trying to reach a secure site, make sure your Security settings can support it. Click the **Tools** menu, and then click **Internet Options**. On the **Advanced** tab, scroll to the Security section and check settings for SSL 2.0, SSL 3.0, -Oh, never mind! You don't know what you're doing. You might as well bust open your weird uncle's footlocker he stashed in the crawlspace and look at his vintage, moldy 1950's nudist magazine collection.
- Click the  **Back** button to try another skanky site.

Cannot find smut server or DNS Error  
Internet Explorer

HOR  
It's even louder in here.

COR to ATL:

COR  
Cover your ears.

She starts in disbelief.

COR  
You heard me.

ATL  
Are you kidding?

COR  
I'm your father. Do as I say. You're too young to hear this.

ATL  
You didn't think I was too young when it suited you.

COR  
What is that supposed to mean?

ATL  
Did you think Ed cover my ears on my own wedding night?

COR  
That's different.

ATL  
How's it different?

COR  
I didn't know what he was like then. I was told he was a gentlemen.

ATL  
Perhaps he would have covered my ears himself. Is that what you mean? Or does a gentleman cover his own ears when he fucks?

COR  
...!

ATL  
Really, I'm too young to know





*COR breaks into an almost childlike fear and worry.*

COR  
How could I know what they were like? We had Ostric's word.

AYL  
The hell we did.

COR  
It was his ring's seal on the letter! You saw it...

AYL  
DID IT NEVER OCCUR TO YOU THERE MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN A HAND ATTACHED?

COR  
Why? Why would they do that? Why bring us here? Just for this?

*She turns to HOR.*

AYL  
Did you know Ostric?

*He stares back at her, then looks down.*

AYL  
There. You see!

COR  
He hasn't said anything.

*AYLA covers her face in her hands.*

AYL  
YOU MISERABLE OLD FOOL.

COR  
For god's sake, why would they go to all this trouble?

AYL  
Ask him if you don't believe me

HOR  
Ask me what?

COR  
Have they killed Ostric?

HOR  
Yes.

...

COR  
Before or after they sent for us?

HOR  
Before.

*AYL knew this but it's still a shock. She begins to cry softly, fiddling with a necklace.*

COR  
Why would they do that? It makes no sense. Why bring us here?

*COR thinks.*

COR  
Was it Horatio? Is he the bastard did it?

...

*FOR w/ MAG in bed.*

She sits behind, legs wrapped around, blindfolding him.

MAG  
Do you miss your parade?

FOR  
You're my parade.

MAG  
Maybe I should wave a flag?

*FOR laughs. Then harder, uncontrollably, remembering.*

FOR  
Once. Once, I remember, when I was a boy I rode with my uncle in a parade honoring of one of his generals. Cruel bastard with a face like a brick. Always pretending to teach me how to fight.

*He stands and walks blindfolded through the room, searching for MAG, recanting.*

FOR  
"You must thrust it like this! LIKE THIS!" he would scream, knocking me to the ground over and over, laughing his brick-face laugh. Over and over. Our wagon was draped with banners til it looked like a cloud rolling across the earth and he stood there, dripping garland down, laughing broken brick chunks of laughter down on his men who trudged under a cage they hauled with a shit-caked man in it high up for the rock-tossers, a man who had been a lord the day before. It was like a line sent down from heaven told me how to do it - to feed his garland like a river of honey into the spokes til it seized and sucked him just like that back to earth, back down. Just as I saw it in my mind...except that our wheel cleaved his head in the process.

*He is still, then erupts in laughter again.*



Shhhh.....

MAG

Killed him, you mean?

FOR

It was the first I ever saw of brains. I remember how grey they were, running out through that brick face into dirt. And how it seemed right that they were. How his laughter was really grey all along. And his pride had always been grey. And it came from a grey place and went back to dirt.

*He pauses mid-memory.*

FOR

I think he had been my mother's lover.

*The QUE stands and begins to exit.*

MAG

Did you feel bad after?

FOR

What for?

MAG

Disloyalty.

FOR

No such thing. You only discover what it is you're really loyal to after a while, that's all.

*AYLA cries softly. She kisses something that hangs from a necklace around her neck. HOR watches her, singing softly in German to soothe her.*

HOR  
Ist mein Leben geträumt  
Oder ist es wahr?  
Ich muß es waggeräumd  
Für ein für allemal

AYL  
Don't look at me.

HOR  
Sorry. It's just...you could be her.

AYL  
Who?

HOR  
Your cousin.

AYL  
Ophelia? You knew her?

*COR crosses himself hastily.*

COR  
Shhh. We don't talk about that.

AYL  
I'll talk about whatever I want.

COR  
It's bad luck.

AYL  
Really?! Now you're worried about your luck? Why don't you cross your fingers, then. And stick them up your ass.

COR  
...!

AYL  
Did you know Hamlet, too?

*He nods.*

AYL  
Orcic said he killed her. Drowned her that night. What do you think?

COR  
For her sake I hope so.

AYL  
You hope that he drowned her?

COR  
For the sake of her soul, yes.

HOR  
No. It was nothing like that.

*COR scoffs.*

COR  
How do you know? Rained her, didn't he?

HOR  
That's not true.

COR  
Where else does a girl her age learn those things? Songs she sang? Whore's songs.

HOR  
He wasn't even here when she died.

COR  
Where was he then?

HOR  
He was on a a...a pirate ship, if you must know.

COR  
...

AYL  
...

COR  
What?

AYL  
Where was he?

COR  
Did he say pirates?

HOR  
It's true. He was on his way from England, but his ship was attacked.

COR  
Fought them off single-handedly, did he?

HOR  
No. In the end, they...treated him well. He was like that. He had a way about him. Even they could sense that.

COR  
The pirates...could sense his...way? Wait. How do you know this?

HOR  
I got a letter and...That's right--

COR  
It's you!

HOR  
The King's letter!

COR  
HORATIO!

*COR attacks HOR. AYL screams.*

COR  
TRAITOROUS BASTARD FILTH!

HOR  
Wait -

COR  
IT'S YOUR FAULT!

HOR  
Listen to me. I can explain. Claudius wrote a letter to be delivered to the king of England calling for Hamlet's death.

COR  
Good for him!

HOR  
Don't you see? It proves my story.

COR  
Where is it, then? This letter. Show it.

HOR  
It was taken from me when I was arrested.

AYL  
But you've read it?

HOR  
What?

AYL  
The letter. You read it.

HOR  
No, that's what I'm -

COR  
No?

HOR  
That's what I'm trying to say -

AYL & COR  
You haven't even read it?

HOR  
I'm telling you. There was no time. I folded it and put it into my coat. But he...he told me what was in it and und

AYL  
He told you?

COR  
You've got to be kidding me.

AYL  
Just kill him daddy.

HOR  
PLEASE.

*COR tightens his grip around HOR's throat, but the moment is over. He shoves HOR against the wall and lets him sink.*

HOR  
I can get. I'll show you. It proves everything. I'm not the traitor. Claudius was the traitor.

COR  
What's the use? Believe what you want to believe.

HOR  
No. I must see it. I need to see it.

COR  
We're never getting out of here.

HOR  
You said your army is coming.

COR  
And when they do? He'll kill us out of spite.

HOR  
Then, there's no use waiting on your people.

*HOR begins pounding on the wall steadily, louder and louder.*

COR  
What are you doing?

HOR  
Trust me.

COR  
...trust...you?

—

*HOR enters the QUEEN'S chamber in chains.*

HOR  
I've got it. I've figured it out. It's so obvious. I can't believe how obvious it is and I've just figured it out. But, I've got it.

QUE  
What are you talking about?

HOR  
He marries her. He just marries her. That's all. And then she's out. And it's done. What's the problem? There's a big wedding. And we have it right away. Everyone will be there. The bride's family and all their people and they'll all be happy because she's out of the box. And why would they jeopardize that? No, they won't. And the bride? - well, she'll be frightened. Of course, she'll be frightened. But, young brides should be frightened. They should. And their mothers should weep and their fathers should suffer because they're men and men don't touch anything except to destroy it. That's just the way that it is. The way it's always been. It's tradition. That's what weddings are.

QUE  
Horatio?

*He freezes. The QUEEN draws his attention to a rather severe looking woman.*

HOR  
Your highness!

QUE  
This is the mother that you have just described. Weeping, I believe.

HOR  
For joy, your highness. JOY! How do you do?

*HORATIO extends a manacled hand to the mortified woman who does not take it.*

QUE  
Perhaps you should look outside.

*HOR does. He turns back, mortified.*

MOT  
Did you just say someone was in a box?

HOR  
Figure of speech.

MOT  
I'm not familiar.

HOR  
Ja, German. Gebenst, actually. I'm sorry, I forget where I am sometimes.

MOT  
What's the meaning of this figure?

HOR  
Well, that a young girl, such as your daughter, we, uh, keep them, ja? Tightly guarded. Because they're so... precious. But, at a certain point, we must...let them out of the box. This is the nature of a wedding, after all, isn't it? Watching a young girl be...unboxed.

MOT  
The Germans sound like an interesting people.

HOR  
And not very romantic. I'm sorry if I offend.

MOT  
I would like to see my daughter now, I think.

QUE  
Of course.

HOR  
I'm afraid that's impossible.

MOT  
Excuse me?

HOR  
You can see her at the wedding.

MOT  
THERE IS NOT TO BE A WEDDING, YOU IMBECILE!

HOR  
Then you will see her at her funeral.

QUE  
He does not speak for us.

HOR  
Think: if you give the girl back now, there'll be nothing to stop them from killing us.

MOT  
I give you my word.

HOR  
She can't. Even if she could, your son won't let them walk away. He'll pick the fight himself.

MOT  
It would be suicide.

QUE  
That would only encourage him.

To HOR:  
Her people are at our gates, what do you suggest?

HOR  
They are our guests. Greet them. The two of you. Step outside and invite them all to witness the marriage of your families.

MOT  
Never.

HOR  
Then you can be the first to see your daughter's corpse.

*Pause.*

MOT  
My people won't accept it.

HOR  
Of course they will. When they see her in her beautiful dress mit her smiling parents beside her.

*The MOT staggers and sits.*

MOT  
You mean to say...my husband... is still alive?

HOR  
And he's given me his blessing.

*HOR enters the cell with a MAID. He looks down at AYL, then to CO RAMBIS. The two men exchange a silent understanding. COR nods. HOR turns to the MAI.*

HOR  
Take her.

ATL  
NO!

HOR  
Take her, I said!

*The MAI grabs ATL's arm and pulls her. HOR turns to COR:*

HOR  
There are only two ways out of this cage. Tell her this one has a future.

*CORAMBIS turns on ATL fiercely:*

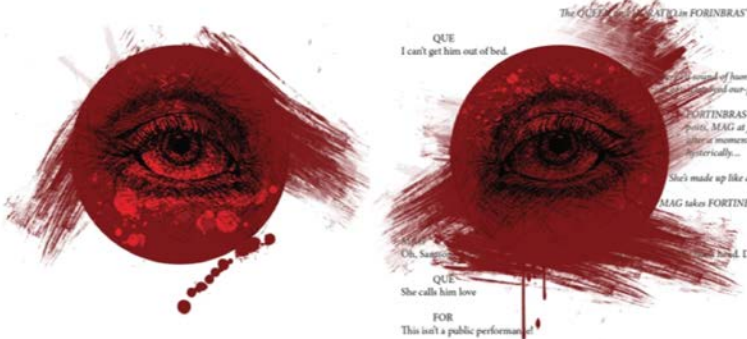
COR  
You heard him! Go!

ATL  
YOU DISGUST ME!

COR  
Get out!

*The maid pulls the girl screaming out of the room.*

*The QUEEN enters ATL in FORTINBRAS chamber:*



QUE  
I can't get him out of bed.

*...of human apocalypse. And then the ... our-pastor bed, like a shipwreck.*

*FORTINBRAS is tied by the arms to its ... MAG at first appears to be crying but ... moment we realize she's laughing ...*

*She's made up like a harlot.*

*MAG takes FORTINBRAS in her arms...*

Oh, Sage ... hand. Do you want to taste it, love?

QUE  
She calls him love

FOR  
This isn't a public performance.

QUE  
Take her out of here. I need a word alone

FOR  
Leave us, I said!

*FORTINBRAS eyes. He looks insane when he opens them.*

*MAG exits with HOR.*

FOR  
AHHH! Untie me there!

*He pulls miserably at his constraints.*

QUE  
I don't think that's a good idea

*The QUEEN spits on a handkerchief and approaches her bound son.*

HOR: I can get you out. Come  
 q  
 u  
 i  
 c  
 k  
 I  
 f-

M  
 A  
 G: Where are we going?

HOR: You've got to prepare  
 and

HOR: It's the only way. There won't be any guards.  
 [Sighs]

MAG: It's sick. You should never trust them  
 not  
 see. He  
 near her

MAG: Explain!  
 H  
 i  
 MAG: Who? HOR: Fortinbras. Help her, you understand!  
 HOR: To do what?

MAG: Wedding?

Just off HOR: Sube vnsqer! :OAM he  
 Dross her, you know.

Und explain m g  
 E n  
 v i  
 e h  
 r y t

*In FOR's chamber w/ QUEEN*

QUE  
 Hold still, would you? FOR  
 Untie me.

QUE  
 Submit! FOR  
 Cover me then.

QUE  
 Please, I'm your mother. FOR  
 MY POINT, EXACTLY.

QUE  
 It's nothing I haven't seen before. FOR  
 Ouch!

QUE  
 I can't get this off. Kneel. Kneel, I said!  
*He kneels. She mistakens the handkerchief with her spit and rubs it at his eyes.*

QUE  
 Look what she's done to you FOR  
 I like this one.

QUE  
 Good. Keep her. I don't care. But marry the girl, for  
 godsake. Think of it as another role. You've played  
 Samson, now you'll play a savior. FOR  
 What's a savior?

QUE  
 Don't look at her like a steak, that's all.  
 FOR  
 Owe.

QUE  
 Hold still, I said. Now, they've been badly delighted, but, if you marry now FOR  
 We keep the girl. I understand

QUE  
 Good. Otherwise... FOR  
 We fight.

QUE  
 That is not an option. FOR  
 Beats courting. Ouch!

QUE  
 Listen to me. These troops of yours are a joke. Ale-drunk by night, ass-up by day. You need to look like Norway,  
 you need to carry Norway. Do you hear me? FOR  
 How does one look like Norway, exactly?

QUE  
 Had you but seen a real king in your time. A great man propelled by the force of history FOR  
 Was my father like that?

QUE  
 He had it in him. We could be united again for the first time since the Kalmar. Or just a crush of tribes raping  
 and slaughtering one another inside a burning barn - it falls on you! Don't you see that? My god, does this excite  
 you? FOR  
 Cover me! Please!

QUE  
 If we don't restore some order, these people will kick our heads down the hall. Feed your member  
 to the dogs. You're tumescent, for godsake! FOR  
 Leave!

QUE  
 What's wrong with you?  
 Is this what you want - our destruction?  
 FOR  
 Nothing's wrong with me.

QUE  
 Look at me.  
*FOR keeps his head down. The QUEEN strikes him hard.*

QUE  
 Look, I said!  
*He looks up sheepishly.*

QUE  
 There is something wrong with you.  
 There is.

QUE  
 You're a slave.  
 You hear me?

QUE  
 To this pitiful body.  
 A  
 low,  
 creeping  
 worm.

QUE  
 And you need to be cured of it.  
*She takes his sex in her hand.*



MAG  
Love.

FOR  
THAT WAS WITHOUT HONOR.  
THAT WAS WITHOUT STATURE.  
THAT WAS WITHOUT PLEASURE.  
THAT WAS WITHOUT

MAG  
LOVE!

FOR *She smacks him. He focuses in on her. He pulls her to him and holds her close*

You

MAG  
What's happened?

FOR  
You have my heart. My whole heart

MAG *She laughs.*  
Your new bride won't be too happy about that!

MAG *She touches his face. She unties him.*

MAG  
Oh, you found your eyes, Samson. Your pretty eyes.

FOR  
My whole heart! I say it again.

MAG  
Yes, love. *He's suddenly grim.*

FOR  
Take it.

MAG  
What?

FOR  
You heard what I said, take it with you.

*He picks her up. HOR steps forward but says nothing*  
*MAG struggles in FOR's grip as he marches forward.*  
*FORTINBRAS throws MAG through the window.*  
*There's a horrible screaming as she falls.*



FOR  
Will there be players at this feast? I wish to see players.

HOR  
L...L...

FOR  
Prepare my beds to meet Norway.

HOR  
Norway?

FOR  
We're a hard country. Cold and empty. But there is majesty in us.

HOR *nods.*  
*FOR focuses on HOR for the first time in this exchange.*

FOR  
Give me your knife.

HOR  
—

FOR  
Give it.

*A very slow, tense moment. HOR delivers the knife at last to FOR's outstretched hand, then braces himself.*

FOR  
Go.

*HOR opens his eyes. Exits.*



*HORATIO digs a grave. The body of MAG is there. The OLD MAN is there.*

**HOR**  
Help me.

*The OLD MAN doesn't move.*

**HOR**  
No, because you're crippled? Or because you detest me that much? I'm doing what I can. I tried to save her. It's her fault. This. What's that poor girl going to do now? Well, that's not our concern. We can't do everything. Perhaps he'll even take a liking to her!

*He looks down at MAG.*

**HOR**  
Though, maybe it's better if he doesn't. He can find someone else. A lover. We'll help him find someone.

*As he speaks the OLD MAN is trying to raise the shovel to hush his skull, but can't bring it up. HOR turns and watches him.*

**HOR**  
No, you're right. Better to leave well enough alone. Back to Wittenberg. You could come. It's good there. I left too soon. There's a change in the wind, but it's not yet. I remember when I first saw Hamlet, though, I thought: It's here. Finally arrived. The dawning of a new age. A prince who studies philosophy. Can you imagine? A rational empire? A king who consults scholars instead of priests? He sat just like this on his last night, convinced he was holding the skull of his oldest friend in his hand. Telling me that Alexander had become a wine cask. And I was just like you, don't think I want. HOLDING THE PICKAXE IN MY HANDS! Saying to myself: DO IT NOW! DO IT! Put him out of our misery! The torches from Ophelia's funeral procession winking at me, closing in.

*HOR attempts to lower MAG's body into the ground. He grunts under the strain. It's slow and awkward. His strain increases and the intensity of his stress. Then, suddenly, a sound, like a moan, comes forth from her body. He gasps and drops her.*

**HOR**  
What was that? Did you hear that?

*He puts his head to her chest and listens. Nothing. He looks up at the OLD MAN.*

**HOR**  
Was it you? A joke? Is that it? Well, it's sick.

*He tenderly touches MAG's face. Moves some hairs from her brow.*

**HOR**  
Oh, no. Just air, maybe. Just air. Trapped in there.

*He moves to touch her chest - his hand shakes.*

**HOR**  
It was my fault. It's...all my fault....

*HOR cries.*

**HOR**  
I was supposed to watch after her. The first himself told me so! But what did that matter? He wasn't the true king.

*said Hamlet. You see? He reaches into his shirt pocket and takes out some dried petals. He sprinkles them like confetti into the grave. She gave them to me. Ophelia. She was like a doll with the eyes holding on by the loosest thread. She needed my help, but I had to go. To the post office. There was a letter waiting. A message from Hamlet. He had sent me a letter. We had to see could I do it. He steps and thinks. He stays at and I have had that letter? ...*

*at the post office in his hand. HOR How is it that I still have these?*

Direct address:  
**HOR**  
 Is there a place where things are held after they're taken? Things that might not seem important to anyone but the person who originally possessed them, but which are not returned for whatever reason. Unknown things. Things that might prove useful later? Objects of mysterious import yet to be revealed - a place for such objects? A drawer or a box? A chest in the attic. Is there someplace I can look where all of the things I used to have are now kept? Surely they weren't just thrown out!

*HOR enters the QUE's chamber.*

**HOR**  
This thing in particular had a royal seal - the king's ring - written in his hand, it was a letter - you may have seen it!

*The QUE sits bombed out, staring at something invisible moving all around her head.*

*She's fishing through a box of papers and cutting them up into butterflies with a pair of scissors.*

*She looks at HOR who's covered in dirt.*

**QUE**  
What's happened to you? Have you been trying to dig your way out?

**HOR**  
A letter on its way to the king of England in the hands of two students...

**QUE**  
Or bury yourself. Is that your plan?

**HOR**  
Calling for Hamlet's death.

**QUE**  
Do you seek a home in the earth?

**HOR**  
Please, I need to see it.

**QUE**  
Perhaps you have friends there?

**HOR**  
It's important. I'm begging you.

**QUE**  
Can you see them?

**HOR**  
I need to know if it was true. The things he said. Any part of it.

*She looks at him nervously. Paws at the air.*

**QUE**  
Ahh—There! - Do you see now?

**HOR**  
See what?

**QUE**  
Can't you?

**HOR**  
I don't understand.

*She points at something distant and moving in that air.*

*She whispers:*

**QUE**  
The butterflies?

*She presses her hand deep into her lap.*

**QUE**  
They're...escaping me. My skirts are...teaming....

*She collapses.*

*In another area: AYLA is being dressed for her wedding in an elaborate gown that makes her look somehow like an enormous moth.*

—

HOR  
Mein Gott.

*The QUE sits on the ground like a little girl.*

QUE  
Prepare me a bath.

HOR  
A bath?

QUE childishly:  
All of my maids are gone.

HOR  
They're assisting mit the wedding.

QUE  
Fetch the water.

HOR  
Where does it come from?

QUE  
Out there.

*She points out the window.*

QUE  
But it comes up out of the ground cold. You have to heat it.

HOR  
Is there a stove?

QUE  
Somewhere.

*She stares at the floor.*

QUE  
It was like a parade when they used to draw it. One after the other, one bucket at a time, up the stairs and down again. Up and down.

*HOR exits.*

*The QUE follows the invisible butterflies and catches one. HOR returns with a wet wash cloth. He mops her forehead.*

QUE  
How could you lose something so important? How could you ever let it out of your sight? A letter like that?

HOR  
I don't know.

QUE  
Why had you not read it?

HOR  
There wasn't time.

*The QUE nods. She begins folding paper to cut a butterfly chain from it.*

QUE  
Lately it seems to me that there are only two possibilities - either nothing is done in error, or everything is.

*This sinks in.*

HOR  
I...didn't want to read it.

QUE  
Or you didn't have to.

HOR  
Because I knew what was in it.

QUE  
And what wasn't.

HOR  
Why would a king write a letter like that and trust it into the hands of two students?

QUE  
Why involve the King of England?

HOR  
He had the boy on a boat...

QUE  
Why not just...

HOR  
Shove him in?

QUE  
We know. We always know. We let ourselves forget, but we know.

*She extends the butterfly chain out before her.*

*HOR notices that the butterfly chain has been carried out of the letter he lost. The box is full of similar letters and photos.*

*He attempts to read around the omissions: it seems to be a drawing that Hamlet made of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern w/ enormous erections, like bathroom graffiti.*

*The GUARD and PUPPET GUARD arrive at the door. The QUE looks at them, blankly.*

QUE  
I haven't called for you.

*They smile strangely.*

GUA  
Your son sends this.

*The PUPPET GUARD hands her a small, ominous black box.*

*She takes it, turns without a word.*

*GUARD(S) exit.*

*HOR watches the QUE set the box down slowly. With every breath she seems more herself. Slowly, over the remainder of the scene, the box begins to bleed.*

HOR  
Aren't you going to open it?

*She turns to face him, but doesn't answer. Then she hears a sound.*

QUE  
What is that?

HOR listening  
Singing.

*The QUE goes to the window and opens it. Music pours in.*

QUE  
It's working.

HOR  
Yes.

QUE  
The people are...happy?

*He nods, joining her at the window.*

HOR  
A celebration.

QUE  
As far as the eye can see. And tomorrow?

HOR  
They'll wake bleary, weak and yielding to embrace a new reality.

QUE  
That easy?

HOR  
It is easy. Being told what to believe. It is the easiest thing in the world.

*He crushes the letter in his hands, as his thoughts turn bloody.*

—

*HOR approaches the OLD MAN in a hallway.*

HOR  
The prince wants players at his wedding. We'll give him players. Take this.

*He hands something to the OLD MAN.*

HOR  
It's Ostric's ring. Find their commander. He'll understand.

—

A MAID dresses the newly refreshed young AYL in ritual wedding attire. It's elaborate.

AYL  
I feel like I'm being prepared for a sacrifice. Have you done this before? Won't you talk to me? Do they ask you not to?

The MAID collects some pins.

AYL  
Are you a virgin yourself?

The MAID shoots a quick glance.

AYL  
I didn't think so.

Another.

AYL  
One can tell from the way a woman moves, so my mother says. She showed me the signs. A man lowers you. The center of your gait is lower. You can see it in the way a young girl moves, my mother says, with her head in the sky, with her feet almost...tripping...that she is tethered to the heavens. But after...she belongs to the earth for good. Almost as if she'd been holding her breath before. Did you feel that way? Was it very painful?

The MAID works at her hem.

AYL  
Some men are rough. That's all they know. Take comfort, says my mother, for you will birth his killer.

The MAID looks up.

AYL  
But what does she know? Ours is a line of weak and foolish men. They came to power just to cling to it, not to do anything else with it but cleave as desperately as a babe to a tit. Is that power? Did you know Oric?

The MAID looks away.

AYL  
It's okay. I knew he was dead even before I arrived. It was his seal on the letter. He never would have suggested this. He wanted me. You understand? Oric travelled with my cousin. That's how I came to know him. The last time I saw him was at the wedding here. He gave me this.

She shows the MAID her necklace.

AYL  
He said he would make a name for himself and he would earn me. I remember we were watching Prince Hamlet sulking over the feasting table and my Oric said that he was not a man. I couldn't believe the nerve. But, he said, look - he's not a boy, but he's not a man, either. What is he? He kept saying, What is he? WHAT IS IT THAT HE IS THEN? I looked at Hamlet and I thought... that he looked just like a dagger. And I agreed: there is something very feminine about a dagger.

ATLA pinches the MAID hard.

MAI  
Ow! That hurt!

AYL  
I needed to know if you could make sound.

MAI  
Of course I can

AYL  
They disfigured the last. I'm sorry. I needed to make sure you understood what I was saying.

MAI  
I don't know what you're saying. I don't listen. The only things that get said to servants are those things that can't be said to anyone else. And then we are made to pay for that. I don't want to know anything about what you have to say to me.

AYL  
I'm sorry. I'm trying to tell you that if you can find a knife and a place on my person to secure it, then I will, as soon as I am able, drive it through the heart of my new husband and as many here as I can lay my hands on. That's what I've been trying to say, but I'm feeling very odd at the moment and it's not coming out right...

FOR enters the room. The MAI and AYL back away. His pants are soaked in blood and he walks slowly, looking pained, but maybe all the more dangerous for it.

The MAI is trying to be invisible.

ATL, meanwhile is constantly adjusting to keep distance between herself and FOR.

This goes on for a while.

Finally he stops and looks directly at her.

AYL  
You shouldn't be here.

FOR  
I want to discuss our marriage.

AYL  
Don't you think it's bad luck to see the bride?

He pauses and considers this.

FOR  
Is it? I could close my eyes.

AYL  
Yes! Yes, close your eyes.

FOR sits on the bench and stares forward, eyes closed. AYL motions to the MAI to get her the dagger they were discussing. The MAI hesitates, but is eventually persuaded. She exits.

AYL  
What was it you wanted to talk about?

For the majority of the scene, FOR speaks w/ a flat affect, as if hollow inside.

FOR  
I feel bad...for how we met. And for the way you've been treated. Force is not the purpose of power, it is power without dignity, which is a weakness.

ATL is taken aback.

AYL  
I see.

FOR  
And I apologize, I will not force you to marry me.

AYL  
Really?

FOR nods  
But...perhaps I can persuade you.

The MAID returns with long, sharp, sewing scissors. AYL takes it and admonishes her. She stands over FOR and raises the scissors.

AYL  
And how would you do that? You don't even know me.

FOR  
I know things. I know what it's like to lose a parent.

She hesitates. Has he killed one of her parents?

AYL  
I haven't...just a parent...

FOR  
Sure you have. How else are you here? Is this a parent's love?

She considers this.

AYL  
Who have you lost?

FOR  
I've lost two fathers and two mothers in two days.

AYL  
Two of each?

AYL is slowly lowering the scissors.

FOR nods  
The father I knew was not my true father, but my true father like him, is dead.

AYL  
And two mothers?

FOR  
No. The same mother twice. Lost the first time because she took and the second, because I think she told the truth.

AYL  
Which is?

FOR  
I am an orphan, like the earth.

She redoubles her effort and raises the scissor again.

AYL  
This is how you plan to persuade me to marry you, by talking like a madman?

FOR  
We're free. We can be whatever we want to be now. Never will you find a husband more free, or more willing to let you be whatever it is you are.

Free...

ave freee e free





*"Five" is a strange word to ATL, she says it almost just to have the word in her mouth.*

ATL  
Five?

FOR  
Whatever it is. Name it.

ATL  
Could we...kill my father?

*FOR laughs.*

ATL  
You laugh—thank god! You're not always so serious, are you?

*He stops and thinks.*

FOR  
I don't know. I don't know how I am. This is my first day.

*ATL smiles, she is about to put the scissors away.*

FOR *eyes still closed*  
You should keep the knife. I can't promise you won't need it.

...

*The OLD MAN appears at the entrance to the castle with 2 insurgents disguised as PLAYERS. They are very young.*

*They carry a large trunk in.*

*They are stopped by the GUARDS, both drunk.*

GUA  
Hab!

PUP  
Who are you?

PL1  
Players. For the feast.

GUA  
Players!

TO PUP:  
Do they seem nervous to you?

PUP  
Something's off

*He scoffs at the youngest of the two PLAYERS.*

PL2  
Why should we be nervous?

GUA  
Drink with us then.

PL2  
We don't drink.

PL1  
Before performances. Our lines...

*The PUPPET GUARD shows a bottle at PL2. He carresses the side of the boy's face with it.*

PUP  
What do you perform?

PL2  
Excuse me

PUP  
Do you know Milicent? I love the story of Milicent.

*He carresses the boy's face again.*



—  
 In an undiscovered country: smoke and moths,  
 The chest is center.  
 OPH approaches it, sniffs and unboxes HOR.  
 She helps him remove the bag from his head, he looks  
 around her in wonder as a needle is dropped onto a  
 scratchy record.



MAG, the chanteuse, sings karaoke:  
 "Total Eclipse Of The Heart" - The Very Best Of Bonnie Tyler 1999, Single Version  
 Originally Produced 1982

Every now and then (Turn around)  
 I get a little bit lonely  
 And you're never coming round (Turn around)  
 Every now and then  
 I get a little bit tired  
 Of listening to the sound of my tears (Turn around)  
 Every now and then  
 I get a little bit nervous  
 That the best of all the years have gone by (Turn around)  
 Every now and then I get a little bit terrified  
 And then I see the look in your eyes (Turn Around, bright eyes)  
 Every now and then I fall apart (Turn Around, bright eyes)

Every now and then I fall apart (Turn Around, bright eyes)  
 And I need you now tonight  
 And I need you more than ever  
 And if you only hold me tight  
 We'll be holding on forever  
 And we'll only be making it right  
 'Cause we'll never be wrong  
 Together we can take it to the end of the line  
 Your love is like a shadow on me all of the time  
 (All of the time)  
 I don't know what to do and I'm always in the dark  
 We're living in a powder keg and giving off sparks  
 I really need you tonight  
 Forever's gonna start tonight (Forever's gonna start tonight)

Once upon a time  
 I was falling in love  
 But now I'm only falling apart  
 There's nothing I can do  
 A total eclipse of the heart

Once upon a time there was light in my life  
 But now there's only love in the dark  
 Nothing I can say  
 A total eclipse of the heart

[Instrumental Interlude]

a video of the FOR/AYL wedding  
 HOR & OPH stand watching as the images begin to flash,  
 scattered and time elapsed—it looks like any modern  
 wedding (and is maybe a collage of several) smiling  
 others walking a row between Bride & Groom sides,  
 excited, doted-up children skipping, guests arriving  
 We see flashes of the ceremony w/ the littlest ring  
 bearer, the bride and groom exiting the church in a hail of  
 rice, the QUT at the reception, toasting a glass to make a  
 speech, COR following with another.

Is there a daddy-daughter dance? Or mother-son? And  
 how does FOR look, exactly—is he a million miles away.  
 Does he feed AYL cake? Is she smiling?

Every now and then I fall apart (Turn Around, bright eyes)

Every now and then I fall apart (Turn Around, bright eyes)

Every now and then I fall apart

And I need you now tonight  
 And I need you more than ever  
 And if you only hold me tight  
 We'll be holding on forever  
 And we'll only be making it right  
 Cause we'll never be wrong  
 Together we can take it to the end of the line  
 Your love is like a shadow on me all of the time (All of the time)

I don't know what to do  
 I'm always in the dark  
 Living in a powder keg and giving off sparks

I really need you tonight

Forever's gonna start tonight (Forever's gonna start tonight)

Once upon a time there was light in my life  
 But now there's only love in the dark  
 Nothing I can say  
 A total eclipse of the heart  
 A total eclipse of the heart  
 A total eclipse of the heart (Turn Around, bright eyes)

In the video, the reception is underway when an excitement stirs the crowd. Lights flash and a stage is lit in the distance and people are being motioned forward to watch the night's entertainment. There's a puff of smoke and an armor-clad king enters to whoops and cheers.

Then we see PL1 & PL2, (Hamlet & Horatio), pointing into the smoke, performing their roles.  
 The crowd tightens.

Whoever is operating the video camera jockeys closer for a better position...

The two performers reach for their seats and the scene goes white.

The QUE and MOT alone have survived (perhaps they were talking together away from the performance?).

The MOT holds AYL's bloody body cradled in her arms.

The QUE approaches her own dead son and begins pulling his boots off.

The MOT watches horrorstruck as the QUE begins undressing FOR and changing into his bloody clothes.

MOT  
 What are you doing?

QUE  
 What's it look like? You should do the same.

The MOT looks at AYL in dismay.

QUE  
 Not her. Your husband. Or one of these.

The QUE points to the bodies of men all around them.

QUE  
 We've a chance out there this way.

The MOT stares, disbelieving, as the terrible sounds outside the door grow in volume.

QUE  
 This is what men live for. Everything else is foreplay. Even the fucking.

She tears her son's pants off, leaving him bare.

MOT  
 How can you leave him there like that? He's your son.

QUE  
 Are you kidding? He's the worst of them.

She pulls on the bloody pants and moves to the door to make her escape.

MOT  
 Where will you go?

QUE  
 America maybe?

The MOT looks mortified.

QUE  
 You need to think about yourself, really, while you can.


MOT  
 I'm not afraid.

The QUE opens the door to the sound of mayhem and flashes of fire. She slips out into it during the following:

MOT  
 Our people chose this place. This hard country. For a reason.

She brushes her daughter's hair. Cleans blood off her face.

MOT  
 I have it in my blood.  
 I gave it to you.





*Back in the undiscovered country, HOR watches a Spanish-dubbed version of the last exchange, like a telenovela, wiping tears from his eyes.*

*OPH tugs on his coat.*

HOR  
I want to stay. This is what I always wanted. To see and not be seen.  
To play no part.  
Just to watch.

*It's beautiful at last.*

*He holds his arms out and closes his eyes.*

*He looks up and opens his mouth as if he could catch raindrops.*

*A figure approaches in the distance.*

*OPH looks, then turns and departs quickly.*

*The figure grows larger. It speaks indistinct words.*

*HOR's eyes open. He hears the sound, but does not turn.*

*The figure grows, still dark, though, almost swallowed in dark.*

*It moves close, lumbering.*

*It drops something behind...*

*It stops facing HOR from the back.*

HAMLET  
Who's there?

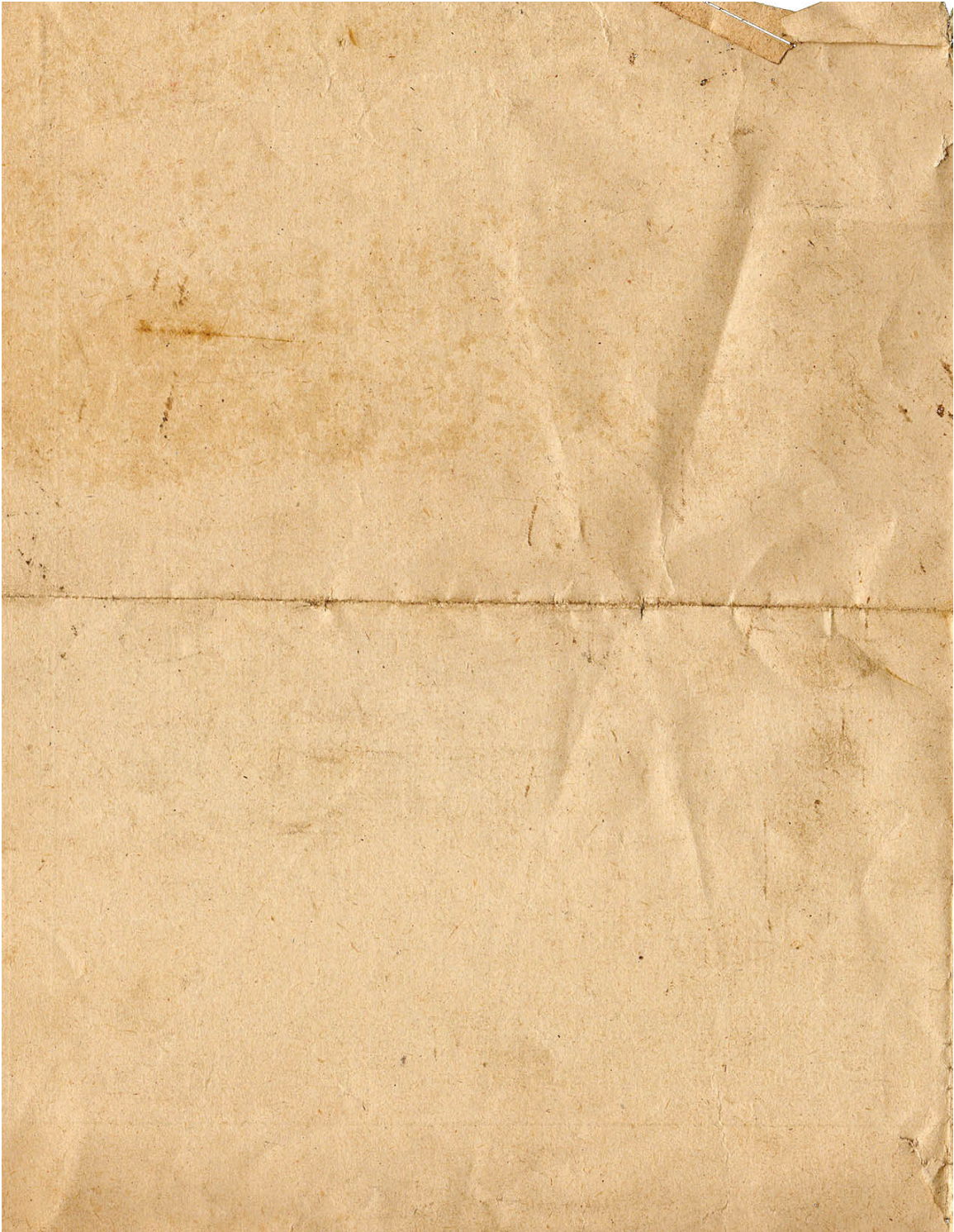
*HOR's eyes widen.*

*Then black.*

END OF PLAY







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