

# Shakespeare's World Cup

*by Chris Coculuzzi, Matt Toner & William Shakespeare*

## **ACT 1: Pre-Game Show**

*A sports field in Toronto. Stands packed with fans. Sun shining. Birds singing. The dull thwack of the executioner's axe. Yes, summer is here and the smell of soccer is in the air. Or is it just the aroma of Falstaff's cleats?*

*SFX: Eerie Music. The sound of bicycle bells tinkles in the air. Three witches ride up from different parts of the field on broom-cycles, cackling in that insanely winning way witches have. They dismount, group up, and start:*

CHLDRS            When shall we three meet again  
                         In thunder, lightning or in rain?  
                         When the hurlyburly's done,  
                         When the football's lost and won.  
                         That will be ere the set of sun.  
                         Where's the place? Upon the field.  
                         There to meet with MACBETH!

*They rip off their robes revealing Cheerleader outfits underneath.*

*(as a Cheer)* Fair is foul and foul is fair:  
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

*Their bit done, they gather themselves and exeunt, cackling ferociously.*

### **Scene 1**

*The music switches to the martial strains of "Rule Britannia."*

ANNOUNCER       Welcome sports fans to Trinity College field and the World Cup of Shakespeare. Here are your semi-finalists for tonight's matches. In the red jumpers, as always, fresh from conquests in France, put your hands together for TEAM ENGLAND!

*Team England takes to the field and begins their warmup. The music switches to the soulful sounds of "That's Amore."*

ANNOUNCER       Now a team that has faced overwhelming odds to be here today. It took a brilliant come-from-behind victory at Cyprus over the heavily-favoured Turks, but here they are: TEAM ITALY!

*Team Italy struts on to the field and begin their warmup. The music switches to the familiar groove of the "Ole!" song.*

ANNOUNCER       Fresh off a show-stopper against Norway, it's TEAM DENMARK! Give a big hand for these Gloomy Danes!

*Team Denmark stride onto the pitch and begins their warmup. The haunting sounds of “Scotland the Brave” fill the air.*

WITCH            A drum, a drum!  
MacBeth doth come!

ANNOUNCER     And, finally, introducing the defending Hibernian champions, also fresh from a dramatic victory over Norway to advance to the Semi-Cup Finals – give it up for TEAM SCOTLAND!

*Team Scotland takes to the field and begins their warmup. BANQUO and MACBETH stop for a moment to soak up the adulation of the crowd. The witches run up to them.*

CHLDRS           All hail, MacBeth! thou shalt be Manager hereafter!

BANQUO           If you can look into the seeds of time  
Speak then to me.

CHLDRS           Thou shalt get Managers, though thou BE NONE!  
So all hail, MacBeth and Banquo!  
Banquo and MacBeth, all hail!

## Scene 2

*The triumphant strains of the UCSN theme begin pounding. Our favorite commentators take their accustomed places.*

MIDDLETON     And with a little prophecy, we are underway! Good evening football and Fringe fans alike and thank you for joining us for what promises to be an EXCITING evening of World Cup action. And by “world” of course we mean the “known world.” But before we get started, we’d like to thank the sponsors of tonight’s tournament, which is brought to you by Dunsinane Enterprises. And by the House of Fortinbras – if it smells like herring, it’s got to be Fortinbras. I’m Thomas Middleton and joining me tonight is a veteran of the Upstart Crow Sports Network, John Falstaff, the Master of the Metaphor, the Baron of the Round Ball --

FALSTAFF        Good to be back, Tom.

MIDDLETON     Tonight’s action is coming to you live from the Middle Kingdom.

FALSTAFF        Talk about your exotic locales! We’re a long way from Tipperary, folks.

MIDDLETON        The semi-finalists from group A squaring off in a Korean finale of epic scope while the finalists from group B will be battling it out from the fields of Japan.

*TOFU, the mascot, has wandered disinterestedly onto the field. At the word "Japan", he half-heartedly hits a small gong.*

FALSTAFF         What the hell is that?

MIDDLETON        That's Tofu, Jack. He's the special commemorative mascot of these 2002 games. Say "hi" Tofu.

*TOFU does a half-hearted little jump, then scratches his butt.*

FALSTAFF         What's a tofu?

MIDDLETON        It's a vegetarian food... never mind.

FALSTAFF         I'll stick with the Dallas cowgirls anytime. Nice costume, buddy.

*TOFU gives FALSTAFF the finger then wanders off to have a cigarette.*

MIDDLETON        Well, we're in for some gripping football action tonite, so let's get to it.

FALSTAFF         Yes, football, the sport of kings and couch potatoes everywhere. We're in for a treat ... uh, Tom, where are the teams?

MIDDLETON        On the field.

FALSTAFF         I thought those were the cheerleaders. You told me I was doing football!

MIDDLETON        Yes, football. *(indicates a soccer ball)*

FALSTAFF         Ok, this is a bit of a curve here. I thought I was gonna do a Madden tonite. *(no reply from Middleton)* Soccer, huh?

MIDDLETON        Football.

FALSTAFF         *(to himself)* Ok, focus Big Jack, focus. Every day in every way, things get better and better. *(normal volume)* Ok, soccer it is. I can do soccer.

MIDDLETON        Good.

FALSTAFF           The trick is not to know what you're doing, but to be able to act like you know what you're doing. *(drops a big wink)*

MIDDLETON        Right. So, Jack, what – if anything - can you tell us about tonight's games?

FALSTAFF           Well, Tom, we all know why we're here: to figure out once and for all which of these teams is tops. Which of these squads are pretenders and which are contenders. And there are no lightweights here, let me tell you.

MIDDLETON        For the Scottish team in particular, there's no question that the defensive load tonight will fall on their star fullback...er ... well, the Scottish player.

FALSTAFF           Who?

MIDDLETON        ... there's this tradition...

FALSTAFF           What? About MacBeth?

*MIDDLETON claps a hand over FALSTAFF's mouth. But it's too late – the damage has been done. All the players on the field simultaneously stop what they're doing.*

ALL                 Aigh! *(pairing up and slapping each other's hands pat-a-cake fashion)* Hot potato, off his drawers, pluck to make amends! *(pinching each other's noses)* Ow!

MIDDLETON        You meant "the SCOTTISH PLAYER."

FALSTAFF           Of course, he's Scottish. I mean, with a name like "MacBeth" –

*Same reaction.*

ALL                 Aigh! *(pairing up and slapping each other's hands pat-a-cake fashion)* Hot potato, off his drawers, pluck to make amends! *(pinching each other's noses)* Ow!

MIDDLETON        This is going to bring awful luck, I just know it. Something terrible is going to happen.

FALSTAFF           This never happens in rugby.

MIDDLETON        You'll have to perform the penance.

FALSTAFF           The penance? I don't need no stinkin' penance.

MIDDLETON You must leave the theatre, spin around three times, spit, quote from the MidSummer's Night Dream, then knock three times and ask permission to come back in.

FALSTAFF You're kidding, right? *(silence)* No, of course you're not. Well, I can't do that – I'm a highly paid sportscaster. Someone else will have to do it for me.

MIDDLETON You have a point. Who'd you have in mind?

FALSTAFF How about that Tofu thing?

MIDDLETON I suppose that would work.

FALSTAFF Better get going there, big fella.

*With his characteristic gesture, TOFU slouches from the field.*

FALSTAFF Well, the – uh – SCOTTISH PLAYER is a brilliant defensive back, coming up huge in Scotland's recent victory over Norway. A fan favorite and recently named team captain.

*They are joined by LADY MACBETH. She's kinda nuts, like Courtney Love if she'd gone to Columbine High.*

MIDDLETON The combination of his tough as nails defence with the ferocity of his co-captain's attack gave Norway all they could handle and then some. We're joined now in the studio by his agent, Lady... uh, Lady.... ?

FALSTAFF Lady Mac-Scottish Player?

MIDDLETON Lady Mac-Scottish Player. Welcome.

LADY M Thanks, Tom. *(confidentially)* I have given suck.

MIDDLETON *(beat)* Good to know. The victory over Norway has thrown the international spotlight on your husband's play. Suddenly, he's gone from being a bit player on a little known team to being courted by big advertisers.

LADY M And that's just the beginning, Tom. Reebok he's got, and Pepsi; and shalt be What he is promised: yet I do fear his nature; It is too full o' the milk of human kindness To catch the nearest way.

FALSTAFF Mreorww! *(makes whipping motion)*

*MACBETH runs up with a soccer ball.*

MACBETH           Is this a football which I see before me,  
The threading toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

LADY M            Unsex me now!

MACBETH           Later, you dirty girl!

*They kiss. Hungrily.*

MIDDLETON        Well, best of luck in tonite's match. Hope to see you both in  
the winner's circle.

*Hand in hand, the Scottish players return to their side.*

FALSTAFF          Absolutely barmy.

MIDDLETON        Fruity as a pair of nutcakes.

FALSTAFF          I hear she wears a vial of his blood around her neck.

MIDDLETON        Disgusting. But in our other semi-final matchup, we're in  
for a thriller.

FALSTAFF          Yessir, it'll be a real clash of styles tonite as we have the  
slow and steady Danish squad against the fleet-footed  
Italians.

MIDDLETON        That brings us to the story of Italy's road to the Cup. And  
for that, we go over to our man on the pitch, Rafael  
Holinshed, for another edition of Holinshed's Highlights.  
Take it away, RH.

*Scene 3 – HOLINSHED's Highlights*

HOLINSHED        Thank you, Thomas. And it's a pleasure to be here at Trinity  
College field. Of course, everyone is talking about Italy's  
big victory over the Turks, but the real story of the Venetian  
Verde goes back further, to the Roma league, in fair Verona  
where we lay our scene. Where a pair of star-crossed  
football players take their lives.

*HOLINSHED is sporting a hefty remote control. I mean, it looks like you could  
fit a pair of Lear's hightops into it.*

And thanks to the miracles of cutting edge Elizabethan digital technology, let's go back to the highlights of that series. Here's a shot of Romeo in goal letting one in.

*We see ROMEO in net getting scored on. His "Soccer Mom" freaks out.*

L MONTAGUE O thou untaught! What manners is in this,  
To press before thy mother to a grave?

HOLINSHED And here's another where Juliet is begging to do homework.

JULIET Good mother, I beseech you on my knees...

CAPULET Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!  
I tell thee what: get to practice on Thursday,  
Or never after look me in the face.

HOLINSHED But their mother's hate could not quench their love. Romeo  
and Juliet secretly wedded and here we see them on their  
honeymoon.

ANNOUNCER And it looks like the Iron Chef will be grilling the octopus –

OTO Fujuri-san!

ANNOUNCER Yes, Oto?

OTO The Iron Chef has told me he plans to use asparagus in  
tonite's dish –

*Everything freezes as HOLINSHED fiddles with the remote.*

HOLINSHED Sorry about that – I hit the wrong button.

FALSTAFF I bet the sun-dial in his garden always says twelve o'clock.

HOLINSHED But in the end parental pressure proved too much...

ROMEO O true apothecary!  
Thy drugs are quick. Thus,  
With a kick, I die.

JULIET O happy dagger!  
This is they sheath;  
There rust and let me die.

HOLINSHED To me, this is just the worst example of football parenting!  
It's just sports enthusiasm gone wild, as wretched boomer  
parents try desperately to escape their empty suburban lives

and live out their dreams through their children. Absolutely horrid! (*catching himself*) For ne'er was heard a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo. The end. Back to you, Thomas.

Scene 4 – OTHELLO interview

*OTHELLO and BRABANTIO enter and takes their seats.*

MIDDLETON      Thanks for that, RH. And speaking of irate football parents, we bring you the current Italian controversy between the Club Owner and the star player. Joining us in the studio is...

BRABANTIO      O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?  
Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her.  
She is abused, stol'n from me and corrupted!

OTHELLO        I do beseech you – send for the lady,  
And let her speak of me before her father.

*They signal to TOFU to get her.*

FALSTAFF        Now don't play coy with me. This is Big Jack talking. You know: you and Desdemona? The beast with two backs? People say it's affecting your soccer.

OTHELLO        She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
And I loved her that she did pity them.  
This only is the witchcraft I have used.

*Enter DESDEMONA.*

BRABANTIO      Gentle Mistress,  
Do you perceive in all this noble company  
Where most you owe obedience?

DESDEMONA     As so much duty as my mother showed  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor my lord.

BRABANTIO      Look to her, Moor, if thou has eyes to see,  
She has deceived her father, and may thee.

*He exits*

OTHELLO        My life upon her faith.  
(*tying a strawberry handkerchief around her head*)

This handkerchief did an Egyptian to my mother give:  
Make it a darling, like your precious eye:  
To lose't, or give't away, were such perdition  
As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA      The Heavens forgive  
But that our loves and comforts should increase,  
Even as our days do grow!

*They exit.*

FALSTAFF      A closing thought: Sex, drugs and rock n' roll may be the  
stuff of life in professional sports nowadays and the public  
seems willing to forgive their flamboyant stars. For  
Desdemona and Othello, it looks like true love does conquer  
all. But will it be enough to overcome the stingy defence of  
the Danes and allow them to advance to the Cup Finals?  
Only time, and good ball movement, will tell. Be good to  
each other.

MIDDLETON      What was that all about?

FALSTAFF      Two words: RAE-TINGS. Stick with me, kid: you'll go  
places.

MIDDLETON      Right now I'm getting word that Raphael Holinshed is at the  
Scottish bench with some late breaking news. Take it away,  
RH!

Scene 5 – DUNCAN discovery

HOLINSHED      Thank you, Thomas. Shocking news is sweeping through  
the stadium here in Japan (*Tofu gongs*) as it has just been  
revealed that Scotland's veteran keeper, Duncan LeRoy, will  
not be able to play in today's match.

MACDUFF      O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart  
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

HOLINSHED      Mean you the Manager?

MACDUFF      Awake, awake!  
Ring the alarum bell! Murder and treason!

MACBETH      Had I but lived an hour before this chance,  
I had lived a blessed time!

MALCOLM      What's amiss?

MACBETH           The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood  
Is stopped.

HOLINSHED        Your old man's bought the farm.

MACBETH           O, yet I do repent me of my fury,  
That I did kill him. Er, them. The murderers.

MACDUFF           Wherefore did you so?

LADY M            Help me hence, lo!

*She faints.*

MACBETH           Look to the lady!

*General consternation. Let's face it: LADY MACBETH is a lot easier on the eyes than a dead DUNCAN.*

HOLINSHED        With your father dead, what will you do?

MALCOLM          I'll to England. There's daggers in men's smiles.

HOLINSHED        Back to you, Sir John.

FALSTAFF          Thanks Raphael – great work as always.

MIDDLETON        Brought a tear to my eye.

FALSTAFF          That guy is such a trooper.

MIDDLETON        A real pro.

Scene 6 – Coin Toss

FALSTAFF          Now I'd ask the audience to turn their attention to center field where the official for tonite's game, Mr. William Shakespeare, is getting ready to take control of this match.

MIDDLETON        Actually, acting in Shakespeare's place tonite, will be our friend Tofu. Say "hello" Tofu.

FALSTAFF          Tofu?

MIDDLETON        This is Shakespeare's "dark" period. He's not doing too well, you know, the tragedy. (*makes glug-glug-glugging motion*)

FALSTAFF        Gotcha.

*At centerfield, TOFU is standing with the team captains and their referees.*

TOFU            Have more than thou showest  
                  Speak less than thou knowest  
                  Run more than thou goest  
                  Set feet when thou throwest  
                  Leave thy drink and thy whore  
                  And kick 'til you're sore  
                  And thou shalt have more  
                  Then two tens to a score.

*The referees toss their coins in the air.*

MIDDLETON    It looks like Scotland has won the toss, will they take first ball or choose ends? Their captain looks undecided.

LADY M        Art thou afeared to be the same in thine own act  
                  And valour as thou art in desire?

MACBETH      And if we should fail?

LADY M        We fail!  
                  But screw your courage to the sticking-place,  
                  And we'll not fail.

*They kiss – hungrily! Meanwhile, it looks like OTHELLO has made up his mind, then IAGO steps in, whispering.*

FALSTAFF      And the Italians will take the north end of the field, ceding first ball to the Danish side.

MIDDLETON    Well, that's it for our pre-game show. Thanks for joining us and enjoy the rest of the Cup finals. We're just a blast of the referee's whistle away from tonite's semi-final matches. Live from Korea, it's Denmark vs. Italy and from the land of the rising sun, we bring you the age-old rivalry of Scotland and England.

## ACT 2) SEMI-FINALS:

### Scene 1 – The Italian Brawl

*The football action should start off on both sides and CASSIO should score. This prompts him to run for some water and IAGO is quick with a special bottle of moonshine. RODERIGO comes running over upset. On his return to the field, CASSIO and DES should “hi-five” and embrace. During the next sequence, we need to move action on the other field towards the English goal. As well, play should resume with Italy and Denmark.*

RODERIGO            Thou told'st me, thou didst hold him in thy hate.

IAGO                Despise me if I do not.  
I follow him, to serve my turn upon him.  
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and football,  
But seeming so, for my peculiar end.  
First, I will tell thee this, Desdemona is directly in love with him.

RODERIGO            With him? why, 'tis not possible.

IAGO                Sir, be you ruled by me: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio.

RODERIGO            Well?

IAGO                Sir, he is rash, and haply with his cleats may strike at you.

RODERIGO            Huh?

IAGO                So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires.

RODERIGO            I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

*RODERIGO heads back to the field and Iago has a moment with the audience.*

IAGO                I hate the Moor,  
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
He's done my office.  
And nothing can, nor shall content my soul,  
Till I am even with him, wife, for wife.

*As RODERIGO heads back to the field there should be a throw-in. Either RODERIGO takes the throw-in and throws it at CASSIO'S face or CASSIO takes the throw-in and RODERIGO spoils it from behind. CASSIO runs after him, strikes him, LAERTES tries to interfere and CASSIO takes a shot at him and chaos erupts. The COMMENTATORS should be monitoring the action closely...*

MIDDLETON      And it hasn't taken long for the Italians to start in-fighting again – looks like there is a plague on the House of Italy. But it sounds like we've got some action over in Japan as well – let's break to Raphael for an update...

HOLINSHED      Well Thomas, news travels fast. Team Scotland heard there was a fight and have started their own blood bath. Is it any wonder they rarely make it into the World Cup? Referee Condell is trying to break up the action now...

*HEMINGE breaks up the Italian riot and OTHELLO comes up to CASSIO.*

OTHELLO          Cassio, I love thee,  
But never more be player of mine.

*HEMINGE hands CASSIO a Red Card and he is benched. Play resumes and CASSIO laments on the bench.*

MIDDLETON      And it looks like Heminge is not going to tolerate that kind of behaviour...

FALSTAFF        Oh for Chrissakes, who ever heard about a *clean* Football game. Back when I coached Oakland, it was all about strategy, discipline, tactics, annihilation...

MIDDLETON      ...Hardware endorsements...

FALSTAFF        "Ace is the place."

Scene 2 – The Untouchable Banquo

*Play resumes. At the Italian bench, IAGO is consoling RODERIGO who is applying a dressing to his black eye. MACBETH comes over for a quick chat.*

MACBETH        Both of you  
Know Banquo was your enemy.

IAGO/RODERIGO True, my lord.

MACBETH        So is he mine. Within this hour, at most,  
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,  
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o'th'time,  
The moment on't, for't must be done tonight.

IAGO/RODERIGO We are resolved, my lord.

*MACBETH returns to his side, RODERIGO returns to the field and CASSIO starts lamenting.*

CASSIO           Reputation, reputation, I have lost my reputation!

IAGO             You have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. I'll tell you what you should do. Confess yourself freely to Des to put you in your place again.

CASSIO           You advise me well.

IAGO             I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

CASSIO           I think it freely and will beseech the virtuous Desdemona.

*He runs to talk to her.*

IAGO             *(after him)* You are in the right.  
*(to the audience)*  
And what's he then, that says I play the villain,  
When this advice is free I give, and honest?  
Divinity of Hell!  
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,  
And out of her goodness make the football net  
That shall enmesh them all.

*At this point there should be a play in the Scotland/England game that gets BANQUO red carded.*

MIDDLETON       Looks like we're seeing red in Japan – let's go to Raphael for an update.

HOLINSHED       Thomas, Scotland can't seem to quench their thirst for blood and now Banquo and his son Fleance will sit out the rest of the match. Grave tidings indeed...

*Play resumes and IAGO and RODERIGO wander over to BANQUO and his son. IAGO is egging RODERIGO on who is brandishing a dagger.*

BANQUO           *(pulling out a water gun and in his best Sean Connery imitation)* Just like a Wop to bring a knife to a gunfight.

*RODERIGO is temporarily frozen and IAGO runs back to the Italian bench when CLAUDIUS appears from nowhere and pours poison in BANQUO'S ear.*

BANQUO           O, treachery! Fly good Fleance, fly, fly, fly – thou mayst revenge. O slave!

*FLEANCE flees and BANQUO dies.*

CLAUDIUS         There's but one down: the son is fled.

RODERIGO           Well, let's away,  
                          And say how much is done.

Scene 3 – “Cuckoldry 101”

*While CLAUDIUS and RODERIGO dispose of BANQUO'S body, OTHELLO scores a stellar goal. This prompts him to go over for water.*

IAGO                *(giving him water)* My lord, did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady, know of your love?

OTHELLO            He did from first to last. *(He tries to head back to the field.)*

IAGO                Men should be what they seem.

OTHELLO            Certain, men should be what they seem.

IAGO                Why then I think Cassio's an honest man.

OTHELLO            I think so too.

IAGO                O beware jealousy;  
                          It is the green-eyed jersey, which doth mock  
                          The meat it feeds on.

OTHELLO            I prithee, give the worst of thought the worst of word.

IAGO                Here, read this.

*At this point, DESDEMONA should move forward (with CASSIO) and remove her bandanna and throw it to the ground. EMILIA runs to it. IAGO gives OTHELLO a huge book entitled “CUCKOLDRY 101” to which he immediately becomes immersed in. IAGO then runs to the bandanna and he and EMILIA have a tug of war. IAGO wins it and runs back.*

OTHELLO            O now for ever farewell the tranquil mind.

IAGO                Why how now Captain. No more of that.

OTHELLO            Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,  
                          Be sure of it, give me the ocular proof.

IAGO                Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief  
                          Spotted with strawberries on your wife's head?

OTHELLO            I gave her such a one, 'twas my first gift.

IAGO                    I know not that, but such a handkerchief  
Did I today see Cassio with.

*At this moment CASSIO and DESDEMONA score.*

MIDDLETON        And a nice pass from Desdemona, and Michael Cassio  
makes the big score!

OTHELLO            Come, go with me apart. Now art thou my lieutenant.

*They take the field.*

*Scene 4 – I see dead people*

MIDDLETON        It looks as if the Italians are in classic World Cup  
performance. Now let's head to Raphael for an update in  
Japan...

HOLINSHED        Thomas, play is currently stopped here in Japan. Despite  
protestations from the Referee, his players and his wife-  
agent, Scotland's top player refuses to play citing that there  
are too many players on the field.

*BANQUO should be wandering around in a ghost sheet and all bloodied up.*

MACBETH            *(screaming)* I see dead people!

*LADY M comes running over to MACBETH.*

LADY M            Are you a man?

MACBETH            Ay and a bold one, that dare look on that  
Which might appal the Devil.

LADY M            O proper stuff!  
This is the very painting of your fear!

MACBETH            I will to the Cheer Sisters.  
More shall they speak: for now I am bent to know  
By the worst means the worst.

*He runs off to the bench.*

LADY M            *(to the TEAM)* My lord is often thus,  
And hath been from his youth.  
The fit is momentary. Play and regard him not.

HOLINSHED        And play is under way once again in Japan.

*Play resumes while MACBETH meets up with the CHEERLEADERS.*

MACBETH        How now, you secret, black, and football hags – answer me  
To what I ask you.

1<sup>st</sup> CLDR        *(as a Cheer)* Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth: beware Macduff!

2<sup>ND</sup> CLDR        *(as a Cheer)* None of woman born shall harm Macbeth!

3<sup>rd</sup> CLDR        *(as a Cheer)* Macbeth shall never vanquished be  
Til Birnam Wood to Dunsinane Field  
Come against him!

ALL              M-A-C-B-E-T-H! Yay Macbeth!

*The CHEERLEADERS take off and HOLINSHED comes running over to  
MACBETH.*

MIDDLETON     And it sounds like we've got some on the fly trading in  
Japan...take it away RH...

HOLINSHED     Thanks Thomas. Well, it seems we've got some defections  
– I am going to see if I can get a comment from the Captain.  
My lord, my lord...Macduff is fled to England.

MACBETH        Fled to England?

HOLINSHED     Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH        The home of Macduff I will surprise.  
Give to th' edge o'th sword  
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls  
That trace him in his line!

HOLINSHED     Wow – that might put a stop to free agents. Back to you  
Thomas.

#### Scene 5 – Bandanna Play-by-Play

*This should be a visual play with the soccer game and people picking up the  
hankie so that the commentary becomes confusing. IAGO should be sticking to  
OTHELLO like glue. MIDDLETON will call the soccer play and FALSTAFF  
will call the hankie play. For Example:*

MIDDLETON     And Gertrude passes it Hamlet, he's got some time with it...

FALSTAFF Looks like Iago has dropped something on the field...

MIDDLETON ...Hamlet passes it to Laertes...

FALSTAFF ...Cassio picks it up, he passes to Bianca, she runs with it...

MIDDLETON ...intercepted by Emilia...

FALSTAFF ...Desdemona seems to be looking for something...

MIDDLETON ...she passes to Roderigo...

FALSTAFF ...Bianca is furious and she throws it at Cassio...

MIDDLETON ...he passes to Bianca...

FALSTAFF ...he's trying to catch her, and Othello has passed out on the field.

MIDDLETON ...Desdemona has come up the mid-field...

FALSTAFF ...Hamlet picks it up, passes it to Ophelia...

MIDDLETON ...she sets up Cassio – HE SCORES! Michael Cassio scores again!

*As DESDEMONA comes running back OTHELLO trips her up.*

MIDDLETON We've got an injury on the field, looks like Desdemona will be out for the rest of the game and horizontal on the bench.

FALSTAFF Now that's my favorite position to play. Wink, wink, nudge, nudge, know what I mean? Heh, heh...

MIDDLETON You're a virgin aren't you?

FALSTAFF Do sheep count?

MIDDLETON Over to RH and Tofu for an update in Japan...

### Scene 6 – Macbeth Finale

*During this introduction, MALCOLM and a couple of English Players should be handing out branches to the "English" Audience.*

HOLINSHED            Well, Thomas, it appears that slaughtering Macduff's family wasn't a very positive move for Team Scotland. Not only has Macduff taken a vow of vengeance...

MACDUFF             Gentle Heavens,  
Cut short all intermission: front to front  
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself!

HOLINSHED            ...but it has also lead to mass defections to the English team. On the flip side – recognizing labor cost savings, Nike has announced that they plan to open up several factories under the brutal Scottish regime. Currently, however, Lady Macbeth seems to be having a hard time trying to keep up with the ball. Let's go directly to the action on the field.

*The English are playing "Monkey in the Middle" with Lady M as she runs around frustrated. Finally MACBETH leaves nets, runs in and grabs the ball and starts a good run. LADY M runs to the bench in tears and picks up a soccer ball.*

LADY M                Out damned spot – Out I say!

*KENT takes the ball off MACBETH and starts to go for the open net. MACBETH rushes back for a vicious tackle. MALCOLM gets the audience to "boo" MACBETH.*

MACBETH             *(to the audience)* You may take my crown but you can never take my dignity! *(He "moons" the audience)*

*CONDELL calls a penalty kick. MACDUFF steps up to take it.*

MACDUFF             Turn hell-hound, turn!

MACBETH             Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane I cannot taint with fear.

*MALCOLM gives the cue to the audience to lift the branches.*

MALCOLM            Your leafy screens throw up,  
And show like those you are.

MACBETH             *(somewhat put-off)* Oh...well...I bear a charmed life that must not yield to one of woman born.

MACDUFF             Despair thy charm – Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripped!

MACBETH             Time-out!

MACDUFF            Yield thee coward!

MACBETH            I will not yield! Lay on Macduff,  
                          And damned be him that first cries, “Hold, enough!”

*MACDUFF runs up in slow motion and lets the ball go and we run the  
“Seagram” commercial.*

HOLINSHED        It’s Macduff with the ball. Macduff having a run now.

*MACDUFF kicks MACBETH in the nuts. Hard.*

EVERYONE        Oooo!

*MACDUFF AND MACBETH rewind their action and do it again.*

FALSTAFF        Es ist Macduff mit dem Ball. Jetzt hat Macduff sein spiel.

*MACDUFF kicks MACBETH in the nuts. Hard.*

EVERYONE        Oooo!

*MACDUFF AND MACBETH rewind their action and do it again.*

MIDDLETON      Ecco Macduff con il pallone. Macduff scatta.

*MACDUFF kicks MACBETH in the nuts. Hard.*

EVERYONE        Oooo!

HOLINSHED      And with Scotland ending in tragedy – England will  
                          advance to the final! Over to you Thomas...

### Scene 7 – Othello Finale

*Just as action is subsiding with the Seagram commercial, IAGO should push  
RODERIGO into CASSIO on the field. Both players are hurt – but everyone  
goes running over to CASSIO. IAGO takes the opportunity to finish off  
RODERIGO with a kick to the gonads.*

RODERGIO        O damned Iago. O inhuman dog!    *He dies.*

*While action is confusing on the field, OTHELLO comes over to DESDEMONA.*

OTHELLO        Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA      What may you mean by that?

OTHELLO I would not kill thy unprepared spirit.

DESDEMONA Talk you of killing?

OTHELLO Ay, I do. That handkerchief which I so loved, and gave thee, thou gavest to Cassio.

DESDEMONA No, by my life and soul.

OTHELLO He has confessed.

DESDEMONA He will not say so.

OTHELLO No, his mouth is stopped.

DESDEMONA Alas, he is betrayed, and I undone.

OTHELLO Weepst thou for him to my face. Down strumpet!

*He smothers her with a jock strap. EMILIA comes running over.*

EMILIA The Moor has killed my mistress, murder, murder!

*Everyone comes running over.*

OTHELLO Nay, stare not masters, it is true indeed.  
'Tis pitiful, but yet Iago knows  
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame  
A thousand times committed.  
And she did gratify his amorous works  
With my handkerchief.

EMILIA She give it Cassio? No, alas, I found it,  
And I did giv't my husband.

IAGO Villainous Whore!

*IAGO grabs the jockstrap and suffocates her. OTHELLO rushes at him but the Danes interfere.*

HAMLET SR. You must forsake this field, and go with us,  
Your power and your command is taken off.

*SFX: Weepy music*

OTHELLO Soft you, a word or two:  
I have done the team some service, and they know't  
No more of that.  
Set you down this: that in Korea once

Where a malignant and a gloomy Dane  
Beat an Italian, and traduced the game,  
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,  
And smote him thus!

*OTHELLO suffocates himself with the jock strap.*

FALSTAFF        *(weeping)* Now that's what I call a domestic tragedy.

MIDDLETON      Uh...right you are Jack – and with everyone dead, Denmark  
will face England in the final.

FALSTAFF        By the by...who was circumcised?

### **ACT 3: Halftime**

#### *Scene 1 – FALSTAFF'S YARN*

*Back to the announcers' table as the teams prepare for the next match.*

- MIDDLETON      Jack, it just doesn't get much better than that!
- FALSTAFF        I'm so verklemmt, I think I'm gonna plotz.
- MIDDLETON      In our first semi-final match, we had a surprise upset with the deliberate Danes outstripping the odds-on favourite Italians.
- FALSTAFF        I tell you, Tom, that Italian side went down faster than Mistress Quickly after six bourbon and cokes. Er, so I've heard.
- MIDDLETON      And the damage to that country's program likely irreparable.
- FALSTAFF        Well, they've got some good building blocks in players like young Michael Cassio but I'm afraid it's back to square one for Senor Brabantio's franchise.
- MIDDLETON      But our second semi-final match of the evening went very much as expected with England overpowering an undermanned Scottish side.
- FALSTAFF        Aye, well, MacBeth was a bonny player, but he's no match for the kind of firepower that England could put on the field this afternoon. You know, it reminds me of the time when I was playing football for the English side. Football, not soccer, you know.
- MIDDLETON      Do tell.
- FALSTAFF        Yessir, I took the ball in the defensive zone and made a beautiful run downfield. Drove right past two defenders in buckram suits.
- MIDDLETON      Two?
- FALSTAFF        If I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me a horse. So I used a little of the old Jack Falstaff fancy footwork and drove right past these four midfielders –
- MIDDLETON      Four? I thought it was --

FALSTAFF            Four, Tom, I said four. Who's telling the story here? So with this pack of defenders swarming at me, I said to myself "Self, how are you going to get past these seven defenders?"

MIDDLETON        Jack, is there a point to this story?

FALSTAFF            What?

MIDDLETON        Is there a reason for all this?

FALSTAFF            A reason? Zounds, an I were at the strappado or all the racks in the world, I would not give you a reason upon compulsion. Give you a reason? I'm Jack Falstaff, kiddo. If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

Scene 2 – Danish interviews

MIDDLETON        Wonderful. Some people get to work with Johnny Most... But on to the big news that is sure to shape our World Cup Final match up. Old Hamlet, the star captain/manager of the Danish side will not, I repeat, not be available for action.

FALSTAFF            Yep, looks like that injury he sustained in the match against Scotland has been re-classified as a fatal inner ear infection. And those suckers sting, let me tell ya.

MIDDLETON        We go now live to the Danish locker room for their press conference. Take it away, RH!

HOLINSHED        Thank you, Thomas. Sad news, indeed, for the Danish side. Their interim captain, Claudius, is just making a statement. Let's listen...

CLAUDIUS            Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
We have taken to wife. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows, that you know, recreant Lear,  
Thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our squad to be disjoint and out of frame,  
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
Importing the surrender of this title.

*Claudius rips up the English flag.*

So much for him.

*The Danish players erupt in adulation.*

FALSTAFF I would have thought the Danes would have gone with young Hamlet to head up their side going into this key match. He's got the skills, he's got the footwork and he's known around the league for his soliloquys.

HOLINSHED It is indeed puzzling. I'm here with the Gloomy Prince, who today is even gloomier than usual. Hamlet, you've lost your father, your inheritance, and now your mother is sleeping with your uncle. We've all been there. But the fans at home want to know what's going through your head at a time like this?

HAMLET O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew.  
Or that the Almighty had not fixt his canon  
'Gainst self-slaughter.

HOLINSHED So you're thinking about a trade in the off-season?

HAMLET Ummmm...something like that.

*Just then, HORATIO runs up to HAMLET.*

HORATIO My lord. *(beat)* I see dead people.

HAMLET Dead people, like in graves and coffins?

HORATIO No, like your Dad. Walking around on the field.

HAMLET How often do you see him?

HORATIO Like, last game.

*They run off.*

HOLINSHED These wacky, wacky Danes. Ah, Polonius, Polonius!  
Upstart Crow Sports Network! Can we get a word?

POLONIUS Yet here, Holinshed?

HOLINSHED Being a veteran of the league, what advice do you have for the younger Danish players?

POLONIUS This above all: to thine own team be true,  
And it must follow as the ball the foot  
Thou canst not then be false to any mate.

HOLINSHED With Old Hamlet gone and Claudius taking his place, are there any other changes planned for your lineup? Word has it that Laertes has asked to be traded to France.

POLONIUS He hath, Raphael, wrung from me my slow leave  
And, at last upon his will, I sealed my hard consent.

HOLINSHED And I understand that there has also been a coach's decision that Ophelia will not play.

POLONIUS I precepts gave her,  
That she should bench herself from this here sport.

HOLINSHED Does that mean you'll be running the dreaded box-and-one offence?

POLONIUS My dear Raphael, to expostulate  
What football should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,  
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.  
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief –

HOLINSHED There you have it, Sir John. Denmark opting to go for experience with their selection of captain, heading into what may be the most crucial contest their country has faced in a decade. Back to you in the studio.

Scene 3 – Moonie Wedding

MIDDLETON And the shocking news just keeps coming and coming, in what might be the most turbulent championship match since the English Drakes upset the Madrid Armada in 1602. King Lear, long-standing manager and captain of the English side, has announced that this will be his last year of Cup play. Lear is retiring.

FALSTAFF I gotta give the guy credit. We've all seen too many poor players in this league strut and fret their hour on the stage and stay out there way too long. Lear wants to leave at the top of his game and I can't say I blame him.

MIDDLETON Actually, he's leaving the league so he can devote himself full time to the religion he's formed while in Korea. It's called the Church of the Dividing Sun and he wants everyone to call him "Reverend Moon."

*Cue revival music. LEAR walks onto the field smiling beatifically assisted by Tofu. Hair slicked back preacher-style, he's wearing long, flowing robes and holds a book.*

LEAR All rise. Thank you. It's a wonderful day here at the Trinity Field and I'd like to thank you all for coming here today. You were looking for a football game, but you've found enlightenment. Hallelujah. I'd like to start today's service with a mass wedding, so if you'd all take the hands of the person standing next to you. So many people, it's a truly a blessing.

*LEAR's daughters step forward with partners, as do CLAUDIUS & GERTRUDE, and any other pairings that might be fun.*

LEAR Know that we have divided  
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent  
To shake all cares and business from our age;  
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we  
Unburthen'd crawl toward death.  
Tell me, my daughters,--  
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?

GONERIL Sir, I love you beyond what can be valued, rich or rare.

REGAN I am alone felicitate in your dear highness' love.

LEAR Now, our joy, although last, not least.

CORDELIA Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty  
According to my bond; nor more nor less.

LEAR Goes thy heart with this? Let it be so!  
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
Propinquity and property of blood,  
And as a stranger to my heart and me  
Hold thee, from this, for ever.  
Hence and avoid my sight!

*CORDELIA exits.*

KENT My liege...

LEAR Come not between a dragon and his wrath!

KENT Royal Lear, whom I have loved as my king,  
Reverse thy doom and in thy best consideration,

Cheque this hideous rashness.

LEAR Hear me, recreant!  
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,  
Take thy reward! If on the next game following  
Thy banished trunk be found in our dominions,  
The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter!  
This shall not be revoked.

KENT Why, fare thee well, King, since thus thou wilt appear,  
Freedom lives hence and banishment is here.

*He exits.*

LEAR Goneril and Regan,  
I do invest you jointly with my power.  
This football part between you.  
Come, noble Tofu.

*LEAR exits with TOFU.*

FALSTAFF What the heck was that all about?

MIDDLETON Community programming. We need do a few hours to keep  
our license.

FALSTAFF Oh. Well, it looks like Heminge and Condell have found us  
our missing official.

*HEMINGE and CONDELL drag out a reluctant SHAKESPEARE behind them.*

SHAKESPEARE Words, words, words... once I had the gift. For sixpence a  
line, I could cause a riot in a nunnery... but now, I have lost  
my gift... It's as if my quill has broken. As if the organ of  
my imagination has dried up. As if the proud tower of my  
genius has collapsed.

FALSTAFF That's a little too much information.

SHAKESPEARE Nothing comes!

FALSTAFF Whoa!

SHAKESPEARE It's like trying to pick a lock with a wet herring!

MIDDLETON Let's go back to live action.

FALSTAFF Good idea.

MIDDLETON

It's the Elizabethan Football Union finals. Up next, England versus a surprising resilient Danish side – at stake, the World Cup.

## ACT 4 – FINAL GAME

### *Scene 1 - Kent's transformation and Revenge Tragedy*

*Play is under way and KENT transforms into a Superman outfit.*

KENT                    Now, banished Kent,  
                              If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemned  
                              So may it come thy master whom thou lov'st  
                              Shall find thee full of labours.

*LEAR and his ENGLISH HOOLIGANS show up and LEAR is pushing a BBQ and the guys all have beer bottles and smoking cigars.*

LEAR                    *(to KENT)* How, now, what art thou?

KENT                    A man, sir.

LEAR                    What wouldst thou?

KENT                    Service.

LEAR                    Who wouldst thou serve?

KENT                    You.

LEAR                    Follow me, thou shalt serve me; if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Where's my knave, my fool?

*TOFU emerges intoxicated.*

LEAR                    How now, my pretty knave, how dost thou?

*TOFU mumbles something*

LEAR                    Dinner, ho, dinner!

*LEAR and his entourage make their way across the field to set up shop upfield and disrupt the action.*

MIDDLETON            And it looks like England has too many players and Shakespeare is trying to clear the field.

*While this commotion is going on, the GHOST appears at the Danish bench and HAMLET comes running over.*

GHOST                   Mark me.

HAMLET I will.

GHOST I am thy father's spirit,  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the field.  
If thou didst ever the dear football love--

HAMLET O God!

GHOST Revenge my foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET Murder!

GHOST The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his jersey.

HAMLET My Uncle!

GHOST If thou has nature in thee, bear it not.  
Fare thee well at once: Remember me.

*He leaves.*

HAMLET *(turning to the audience)*  
Never make known what you have seen to-day,  
How strange or odd some'er I bear myself  
That you know aught of me. Swear!

*If the audience does not swear, have the GHOST'S voice be a sound effect that thunders "Swear!" disrupting all action. HAMLET returns to the field with his own soccer ball and starts doing all kinds of "ball" sports (eg. Volleyball, Bowling, Basketball) with it.*

### Scene 2 - What a Bastard

*Back to action on the field, Goneril dismisses LEAR'S men and he erupts.*

LEAR What, fifty of my hooligans, at a kick?  
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child. Away, away!

*LEAR leaves with TOFU. TOFU gives GONERIL the finger.*

MIDDLETON And with Lear gone, we're gonna need someone from the  
sub-plotitute in and it looks like Gloucester is calling up  
Edgar. Jack, what can you tell us about this guy.

FALSTAFF Well Tom, Edgar is a complex player, who is difficult to nail down, because he never reveals his true position. But one thing is for certain, this kid is legitimate.

MIDDLETON It's strange Gloucester didn't go with Edmund.

FALSTAFF Not at all, Tom. He may be a great midfielder with a deadly long shot but at the end of the day, he's a real bastard.

EDMUND *(at the bench)* Why bastard? Wherefore base?  
Fine word, "legitimate"!  
Well, my legitimate,  
If my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall top the legitimate. I grow, I prosper:  
Now gods, stand up for bastards!

*EDGAR scores a goal.*

EDMUND I said for bastards!

*EDGAR comes to the bench for water. EDMUND is brooding on the bench.*

EDGAR How now, brother Edmund! What serious Contemplation are you in?

EDMUND When saw you my father last?

EDGAR Why, the play gone by.

EDMUND Found you no displeasure in him by word Or countenance?

EDGAR None at all.

EDMUND Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him: And at my entreaty forbear his presence.

EDGAR Some villain has done me wrong.

EDMUND That's my fear. Pray ye, go!  
If you do stir abroad, go naked.

*EDMUND starts to take off EDGAR'S jersey.*

EDGAR Naked, brother!

EDMUND Brother, I advise you to the best; go naked:  
I am no honest man if there be any good meaning  
Towards you.

EDGAR                    My face I'll grime with filth,  
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots...

*GLOUCESTER starts to head over*

EDMUND                I see my father coming - pardon me;  
In cunning I must kick my cleats upon you.  
Kick, seem to defend yourself; now quit you well.

*EDGAR runs away. GLOUCESTER arrives.*

GLOUCESTER        Now, Edmund, where's your brother?

EDMUND                Fled this way, sir, when by no means he could  
Persuade me to the murder of your lordship.

GLOUCESTER        O villain, villain! Come go with me apart.  
Now art thou my legitimate.

*GLOUCESTER and EDMUND return to the field.*

### Scene 3 - The Cheerleaders

MIDDLETON        Well we've got a new wave of substitutions. As Edmund  
comes on for his brother Edgar, Rosencrantz and  
Guildenstern have joined Denmark.

*ROS and GUILD run after HAMLET but he ignores them.*

R&G                    Lord Hamlet - There are the Cheerleaders!

*The CHEERLEADERS show up at the Denmark bench and HAMLET runs over to them.*

HAMLET                Can you cheer The Murder of Gonzago?

CHLDRS                Ay, my lord. Gimme a G. Gimme an O. Gimme a...

HAMLET                Very well. You could for a need study a cheer of some  
dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert  
in't, could you not.

CHLDRS                Ay, my lord.

HAMLET                Very well - follow me.

*HAMLET and the CHEERLEADERS venture off to study the new cheer.*

Scene 4 - Kent is stocked and the Hamlet Penalty Kick

*Back on the field, ROS accidentally gets in KENT's way and a fight begins.*

KENT                    You whoreson dog, you slave, you cur!

ROS                     I am none of these, my lord, I beseech your pardon.

KENT                    Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal? *(Strikes him)*

ROS                     I'll not be strucken, my lord. *(Starts to walk away)*

KENT                    Nor tripped neither, you base football player. *(Trips him)*

*ROS gets up - they square off with fisticuffs. SHAKESPEARE blows the whistle. Everyone freezes. SHAKESPEARE gives two short whistle blows. Two other players come running up to KENT and ROS and put hockey gloves on them. They return to square off, SHAKESPEARE blows again, they throw down the gloves and KENT starts decimating ROS. In the end, KENT is thrown in the stocks.*

MIDDLETON            And the result of that brawl has KENT in the goal stocks and a penalty kick is awarded to Denmark. To take the kick will be young Hamlet.

*HAMLET steps up to take it but is indecisive.*

HAMLET                To kick, or not to kick: that is the Question.

*OPHELIA comes running up to him and tries to return the strawberry handkerchief.*

OPHELIA                My lord, I have remembrances of yours  
That I have longed long to redeliver.

HAMLET                Ahhh!!! Get thee to a Nunnery!

*HAMLET picks up the ball, throws it at her and runs away screaming. Play resumes for a while until LEAR enters with a cooler of beer and flips out about KENT.*

LEAR                    Who put my man i'the stocks?  
*(To SHAKESPEARE)* You? Did you?

GONERIL                Come, sir,  
I would you would make use of your good wisdom.

LEAR                    Are you our daughter?

GONERIL                I do beseech you  
To understand my purposes aright:  
*(Pointing to the beer)*  
A little to disquantity your train.

LEAR                    Degenerate bastard, I'll not trouble thee:  
Yet have I left a daughter. Regan—

REGAN                   Give ear, sir, to my sister.  
If you will come to me, I entreat you  
To bring but four and twenty.

LEAR                    What, must I come to you  
With four and twenty?

GONERIL                What need you four and twenty? *(removing a 2-4)*

REGAN                    What need you twelve? *(removing a 12 pack)*

GONERIL                Or six? *(removing a six pack)*

REGAN                    What need one? *(removing the beer in his hand)*

LEAR                    O, reason not the need! I will do such things—  
What they are yet I know not, but they shall be  
The terrors of the earth! O Tofu, I shall go mad.

*LEAR and TOFU exit.*

*Scene 5 – Mousetrap and Closet*

*Play resumes for a while when HAMLET brings CLAUDIUS over to the bench to hear the new cheer.*

CHLDRS                *(as a cheer and a pantomime)*  
Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected  
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

*CLAUDIUS screams and runs away.*

HAMLET                *(yelling after him)* What, frighted with false fire?

*CLAUDIUS re-enters the game and is so freaked out by the cheer, he does an amazing run with the ball and scores.*

MIDDLETON      And Claudius motivated with a cheer, ties up this game.  
What an outstanding play.

*CLAUDIUS goes off to one corner and kneels to pray.*

CLAUDIUS      O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven.  
May one be pardon'd and retain th'offence?  
Try what repentance can. All may be well.

*HAMLET comes running up to him with dagger in hand.*

HAMLET      Now might I do it pat. Now he is praying.  
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to Heaven?  
*(SFX: Ice Cream Truck)* Ice Cream?

*HAMLET runs away. EDMUND wanders over to CLAUDIUS for a drink of water.*

CLAUDIUS      I have in quick determination  
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England.  
*(To EDMUND)* Can I talk to you for a second?

*Play resumes. Meanwhile – over at the Danish bench, POLONIUS is instructing GERTRUDE and the GHOST takes over in goal.*

POLONIUS      He will come straight. Look you lay home to him,  
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with.  
I'll silence me even here.  
*(He starts to go under the bench)*  
Pray you be round with him.

GERTRUDE      Withdraw, I see him coming.

*HAMLET starts to walk by.*

GERTRUDE      Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAMLET      What's the matter now?

GERTRUDE      Have you forgot me?

HAMLET      No, by the ball, not so.  
You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,  
And, would it were not so, you are my mother.

GERTRUDE      *(getting up from the bench)*  
Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAMLET      *(putting her back down)*

Come, come, sit you down, you shall not budge.

GERTRUDE           What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?  
Help, ho!

POLONIUS           What, ho! Help!

HAMLET             How now? A rat! Dead for a ducat, dead.

*HAMLET suffocates POLONIUS with the jockstrap.*

GERTRUDE           O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET             Almost as bad, good mother,  
As kill a Captain and marry with his brother.

GERTRUDE           What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue  
In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET             Such an act,  
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Call virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
And sets a blister there, makes marriage vows  
As false as dicers' oaths. O, such a deed—

*GHOST comes over to HAMLET.*

GHOST               Do not forget. This visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
And for Chrissakes, I need some defence here!

HAMLET             I must be cruel only to be kind.

GERTRUDE           Be thou assur'd, I have no life to breathe  
What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET             *(dragging POLONIUS)*  
I'll lug the guts into the Commentator Room.

*HAMLET places POLONIUS under the Commentator table and then joins the team – this time playing seriously. FALSTAFF and MIDDLETON start smelling the air, their armpits and looking at each other.*

FALSTAFF           Hey Tom, is it just me, or is something rotten in the state of  
Denmark?

MIDDLETON         No Jack – it's all you.

*Scene 6 – Rain delay*

*At this point we either turn on a pre-set sprinkler or have LEAR enter (with TOFU and EDGAR) while being sprayed with water.*

MIDDLETON      We are currently experiencing a rain delay on England's side...

LEAR                Blow wind, crack your cheeks!

FALSTAFF        I knew it wasn't me!

MIDDLETON      But we have some interesting action over on the Danish side, so take it away RH...

*HOLINSHED is interviewing CLAUDIUS and HAMLET*

HOLINSHED      Thanks, Tom. We have World Cup history in the making as Team Denmark is trading one of their top players over to England.

CLAUDIUS        Hamlet, prepare thyself.  
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,  
Th'associates tend, and everything is bent  
For England.

HAMLET            For England?

CLAUDIUS        Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET            Good.

*HAMLET crosses over with ROS and GUILD.*

CLAUDIUS        So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes. Heh, heh...  
...Did I say that out loud?

HOLINSHED      Back to you Tom.

MIDDLETON      Thanks, RH. And the World Cup firsts aren't over yet. It appears that Lear has complained to EFA Officials about his daughters, and they are currently investigating the allegations.

*On the English bench, LEAR is having his mock-trial. The three CHEERLEADERS preside as judges.*

LEAR I will arraign them straight. Bring in their evidence  
(*To EDGAR*) Thou robed man of justice, take thy place.

EDGAR The foul fiend haunts Poor Tom in the voice of a  
nightingale.

LEAR (*To TOFU*) And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,  
Bench by his side.

TOFU And I'll go to bed at noon.

*TOFU passes out drunk.*

LEAR Arraign her first, 'tis Goneril – I here take my oath before  
this honorable assembly – kicked the poor King her father.  
(*To REGAN*)  
And here's another whose warped looks proclaim  
What store her heart is made on.

*GONERIL and REGAN head back to the field.*

LEAR Stop her there!

EDGAR Tom will throw his head at them: avaunt, you curs!

*The CHEERLEADERS hold up placards of 5.9, 5.8 and 2. The other two  
CHEERLEADERS look at her.*

LEAR Arms, arms, sword, fire, corruption in the place!

MIDDLETON And it appears that the French judge has taken bribes yet  
again.

FALSTAFF Well that explains World Cup '98.

### Scene 7 – Blinding Treason

*Play resumes and the soccer is intense in front of England's goal. A crowd of  
English players are trying to get it out, but then it gets knocked into their own  
goal.*

MIDDLETON And the Danes get one served to them on a platter as  
England scores on their own net.

FALSTAFF I'd hate to be the player that did that – scoring on your own  
net in this tournament is tantamount to Treason.

*Arguing abounds on the English side until finally EDMUND points to GLOUCESTER. GONERIL and REGAN jump on him, bring him to the ground and claw at his face. When he gets up, he has the strawberry bandanna wrapped around his eyes.*

GLOUCESTER      All dark and comfortless? Where's my son Edmund?  
Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature  
To quit this horrid act.

REGAN              It was he  
That made the overture of thy treasons to us.

GLOUCESTER      O my follies! Then Edgar was abused?  
Kind gods, forgive me that and prosper him.

*Play resumes and GLOUCESTER runs around trying to kick the ball. He ends up kicking ROS in the gonads and killing him. GUILD starts to fight.*

GUILD              Thou old, unhappy traitor.  
The cleat is out that must destroy thee.

*EDGAR comes rushing to his aid and kicks the snot out of GUILD.*

GUILD              Slave, thou hast slain me. Give the letters which thou find'st  
about me to Edmund.

*GUILD dies.*

EDGAR              *(reading the letter)*  
"And England, if my love thou hold'st at aught  
Thou mayst not coldly set  
Our sovereign process, which imports at full  
The present death of Hamlet."  
*(calling to HAMLET)* Hamlet, oh, Hamlet!

*EDGAR runs to HAMLET and they share the letter.*

*Scene 8 – All hell breaks loose.*

*At this point LEAR enters in a cheerleader outfit and runs around being chased by CORDELIA.*

MIDDLETON      And we have a late substitution on the Danish side as Laertes  
has just hotly arrived from France.

FALSTAFF        And Cordelia is back from France as well, chasing it seems,  
the bearded lady.

*LAERTES comes racing on and attacks CLAUDIUS.*

LAERTES           Where is my father!

*At this point OPHELIA picks up the soccer ball, runs around frantically, knocking people over.*

OPHELIA           *(as she knocks people over)* There's rosemary...and there is pansies...there's fennel for you...and columbine...and there's rue for you...you must wear your rue with a difference...and there's a daisy!

*OPEHLIA makes a "try" in the end zone.*

FALSTAFF           That girl is loopy. What the hell does she think this is? Rugby? For God's sake – that was **so** last year.

## **ACT 5 – Sudden Death O/T**

*Back to the announcers' table.*

MIDDLETON      There's the official's whistle, signalling the end of regulation. The score is still tied at (X), nothing done, so it looks like we'll be heading for an overtime kickoff to resolve this contest.

FALSTAFF          And folks, this is where the game can really change. We're going into sudden death overtime, where everything goes and anything is possible.

MIDDLETON      Quite thrilling.

*TOFU runs over and whispers something in FALSTAFF's ear.*

FALSTAFF          Hold everything, Tom! I've just received astounding news from the English side: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.

*A moment's silence at FALSTAFF's obvious referential humor.*

MIDDLETON      Well, that will certainly hurt Denmark's chances.

FALSTAFF          Oh, absolutely.

*By this time, both teams have lined up at each other's nets. For the purpose of the Elizabethan football union, the ball remains at midfield and both teams try to kick it. But are massively unsuccessful. The pace is frantic.*

MIDDLETON      I see the players have taken their positions. It looks like it will be England taking the first kick.

FALSTAFF          Their man Edmund stepping to the line, excellent striker. There's the referee's signal...

*Edmund is winding up for his kick when suddenly a trumpet sounds thrice. Edgar slowly comes out dressed as a MATRIX AGENT and engages Edmund in a tremendous karate match.*

FALSTAFF          Well, Denmark got a break that time.

MIDDLETON      Young Hamlet at the line. Looks like he's resolved any inner doubts, put all that baggage behind him, he's just here to play soccer now. Let's see what he can do.

*HAMLET prepares for his shot on net, LAERTES comes running up to make a play on the ball. They "duel" for the ball.*

MIDDLETON      Nothing done there.

*GERTRUDE stands at the foul line, checks the wind, knocks the dirt of her cleats. On her side, REGAN mimics Gertrude's preparations.*

FALSTAFF          Gertrude making her preparations. Excellent monologist, capable of explosive delivery.

*GERTRUDE reaches down and takes a drink from the poisoned water bottle, tosses it to REGAN, who does likewise. They start their runs...*

GER/REGAN        The drink, the drink! I am poisoned!

*They die.*

MIDDLETON        Oh, now that was unexpected.

FALSTAFF          Terrible. But if any man can do it now, it's Claudius. Denmark's captain stepping up in their hour of need.

*As CLAUDIUS begins his run at the ball, LAERTES calls out:*

LAERTES            The Captain's to blame!

*HAMLET topples CLAUDIUS with a devastating sliding tackle. CLAUDIUS drops like a felled tree.*

MIDDLETON        Some help there for the Danish side as England's ace midfielder will try to drive one last nail into Denmark's coffin.

GHOST              *(in net)* Hey!

*Rather than actually kicking the ball, GONERIL commits seppuku at the penalty line. Tofu sounds a gong as she knifes herself.*

FALSTAFF          Nice tip of the hat there to the host country.

*MIDDLETON describes the action as HAMLET makes a vain attempt to kick the ball. LAERTES has expired.*

MIDDLETON        England now with a commanding lead but Denmark has one last chance to stay alive. Young prince Hamlet is making a brave try to get to his feet. He's been mad, traded to England, sent back, stabbed, poisoned, stepped on but this Gloomy Dane will not let be. He's down again, he's trying to get up but it looks like his too, too solid flesh has finally started to melt.

FALSTAFF            England now all set to wrap this match up. They just have to make contact with the ball and it's all over for Denmark.

*LEAR staggers towards the foul line, carrying the dead CORDELIA with netting around her neck. He is labouring.*

FALSTAFF            Lear not looking good there. Looks like he's got the weight of the world on his shoulders. No question, it's been a tough night for England's captain.

MIDDLETON         But this could be the final note of a magnificent career. What a way to cap it all off, with a stunning overtime penalty goal to give them the title.

*Upon reaching the ball, LEAR winds up, wavers, then collapses of a heart attack.*

FALSTAFF            Tremendous!

MIDDLETON         It's all over for Denmark! I don't see how they can catch England now!

*HORATIO starts to make a brave run for the ball, but HAMLET waves him off.*

HAMLET              If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart.  
Draw thy breath In pain, to tell my story.

*Cue Matrix effect. The field rotates in super slow motion as EDGAR and EDMUND take their karate to the next level. The three horns sound thrice again, but super slowly, as EDMUND goes down in a heap.*

MIDDLETON         And England has become the world champions!

FALSTAFF            Tom, this was a team that fought through a lot of adversity tonight.

MIDDLETON         A great sign of character and a tremendous post-humous accomplishment for Lear.

FALSTAFF            Too bad he won't be around to share in the spotlight.

MIDDLETON         And the sounds of the English team celebrating would be deafening if they weren't all dead.

*SHAKESPEARE blows his whistle and waves hands indicating "NO"*

MIDDLETON         This is most unusual. We'll have to get a ruling from the official.

*SHAKESPEARE makes “disqualified” sign.*

MIDDLETON Yes, that’s it. England is disqualified. It seems that Edgar is a major character who is still alive and that clearly goes against the rules of tragic football.

FALSTAFF Not to mention he CGI.

MIDDLETON And it’s no surprise that in a World Cup match packed with excitement, we should have a surprise ending. The 2002 World Cup champions are...

FORTINBRAS Not so fast!!!

MID/FAL Norway?!

*Led by FORTINBRAS, Team Norway comes charging onto the field. They race up to the penalty line and FORTINBRAS blasts a kick past the hapless GHOST*

FALSTAFF Do you believe in Miracles!!! Norway takes the Cup!  
Norway takes the World Cup!

*The loudspeakers start blaring the Monty Python “Spam” song. Pandemonium breaks out as the Norwegians cavort on the field, run over to the announcer’s table and steal the Cup. FALSTAFF jumps up and joins the celebration on the field.*

MIDDLETON Umm...y’know...technically they were eliminated in the first round.

HOLINSHED Thomas, in a surprise move, the unranked Norwegian team has crashed today’s tournament and scored the winning goal in this World Cup match. The crowd is going wild down here on the field. I’ve lost Tofu in the crowd. There are hooligans running everywhere. I’ll try to get an interview.

*HOLINSHED makes his way to FORTINBRAS. Just as he reaches him everyone freezes on the field. SFX: Eerie music. Enter three Cheerleaders walking their bicycles back to the center. As they speak they slowly dress again in robes.*

CHLDRS When shall we three meet again  
In thunder, lightning or in rain?  
When the hurlyburly’s done,  
When the football’s lost and won.  
That will be ere the set of sun.  
*(Start chanting)* Fair is foul and foul is fair:  
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

*They cycle away chanting the mantra. Exeunt.*