

“RUBY OF ELSINORE”  
One Act Play  
by Bruce Kane

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22448 Bessemer St.  
Woodland Hills, CA 91367  
PH: 818-999-5639  
E-mail: [bkane1@socal.rr.com](mailto:bkane1@socal.rr.com)

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“RUBY OF ELSINORE”  
by Bruce Kane

SETTING: Ruby's House of Beauty - Elsinore, Denmark

CHARACTERS:

RUBY – Hairdresser. Late thirties. Lots of hair. Lots of attitude.  
OPHELIA – Hamlet's sometime girlfriend. Young and naïve  
GERTRUDE – Hamlet's mother. Haughty, self involved  
CLAUDIUS – Hamlet's lusty, but suspicious stepfather  
HAMLET – Prince of Denmark. Sullen, indecisive  
GHOST – Angry and bloodthirsty.

*(AT RISE: Ophelia fusses with her hair, while Ruby tries to style it. )*

RUBY: Stop playin' with your hair girl. That's my job.

OPHELIA: Oh Ruby, you have to make me especially beautiful.

RUBY: Honey, this is a comb, not a magic wand.

OPHELIA: I mean it. I have to look really good tonight.

RUBY: What's the big occasion?

OPHELIA: I'm going to be a princess.

RUBY: Trust me honey, you've been a princess for a long time.

OPHELIA: No, I mean a real princess... With the tiara and everything.

RUBY: Who died?

OPHELIA: Nobody died.

RUBY: I thought with you people, every time someones dies, you all move up one.

OPHELIA: I'm going to marry a prince.

RUBY: A prince? You're going to marry a prince.

OPHELIA: That's right. I'm going to be Princess Ophelia.

RUBY: He told you he was a prince.

OPHELIA: He is a prince.

RUBY: I'd be careful if I were you, child. A lot of frogs walkin' around these days claimin' to be princes.

OPHELIA: This one's no frog.

RUBY: I'd run a background check. At least google him. Every guy nowadays with a pair of tights and a sword says he's a prince.

OPHELIA: Ruby, I'm going to marry Prince Hamlet.

RUBY: Hold on here... You are going to marry the Prince of Darkness?

OPHELIA: You shouldn't say those things about him.

RUBY: Honey, that man could depress a laughing hyena.

OPHELIA: He's got a lot on his mind.

RUBY: He's a friggin' prince. He doesn't do jack. What the hell he could he have on his mind?

OPHELIA: It's his father.

RUBY: Unless they went to a lot of expense to bury the wrong guy, your boyfriend's father is dead.

OPHELIA: That's the problem.

RUBY: What are you tellin' me, the old guy's not dead.

OPHELIA: Oh no... He's dead, alright.

RUBY: That's what's the friggin' problem?

OPHELIA: Hamlet thinks... (she fidgets)

RUBY: What? He thinks what?

OPHELIA: I really shouldn't say anything.

RUBY: Fine with me child. Whatever it is, I wouldn't pay much attention. If you ask me, all these royals are a couple of raisins short of a Danish. It's what happens when cousins marry cousins.

OPHELIA: Hamlet doesn't think his father died of natural causes.

RUBY: Hell, girl, this is Elsinore. Nobody dies of natural causes.

OPHELIA: You have to promise not to tell a soul.

RUBY: My lips are sealed.

OPHELIA: Well, Hamlet thinks that his step father...

RUBY: You mean, the new king.

OPHELIA: Right... Claudius... Hamlet thinks the new king had something to do with his father's... Well, you know. (fidgets some more)

RUBY: He thinks King Claudius croaked his old man.

OPHELIA: Something like that.

RUBY: That'd be my guess.

OPHELIA: You think the king could do something so gross?

RUBY: Like I said honey, this is Denmark. There's always something rotten goin' on somewhere. And you can quote me on that. So tell me, did the prince of indecision figure this out all by his lonesome?

OPHELIA: Not exactly.

RUBY: Just how, exactly.

OPHELIA: You have to promise not to whisper a word of this to anyone.

RUBY: You know what I always say, child. What happens at Ruby's, stays at Ruby's.

OPHELIA: His father told him.

RUBY: His father is dead.

OPHELIA: That's why you can't tell anyone.

RUBY: Why would I want to?

OPHELIA: I know it's hard to believe.

RUBY: Oh no... Hard to believe? Hamlet's dead father told him that Claudius bumped him off?

OPHELIA: That's it in a nutshell.

RUBY: I'd say "nutshell" was an excellent choice of word. And you're going to marry this guy?

OPHELIA: When he asks me.

RUBY: Hold on just a cotton pickin' minute here... He hasn't asked you to marry him?

OPHELIA: Not in so many words.

RUBY: Well, if he does, it'll be in so many words you won't understand what the hell he's talking about. How well do you know Prince Hamlet?

OPHELIA: Well.... Let's just say... "well enough."

RUBY: Take it from someone who's been there honey... Sometimes "well enough" ain't good enough.

OPHELIA: I know he loves me.

RUBY: He told you that.

OPHELIA: Well...

RUBY: Not in so many words. For the life of me, I'll never understand why women let men off the hook when it comes to saying "I love you."

OPHELIA: Because I know he does.

RUBY: At your age, you don't know jack. Especially when it comes to men.

OPHELIA: I know how he feels from the way he looks at me.

RUBY: Don't confuse myopia with interest.

OPHELIA: (adamantly) He loves me and I am going to marry him.

RUBY: Okay... It's your life. I'd just be careful if I was you, child. The prince just never seemed the marryin' kind, if you know what I mean.

OPHELIA: No, I don't know what you mean.

RUBY: Him always hanging around with those two guys.... Y'know Rosenberg Guildenkrantz.

OPHELIA: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

RUBY: Whatever... They're both a little light in leotards if you ask me.

OPHELIA: They were all friends in college. And there's nothing wrong with Hamlet.

RUBY: I just never seem him with any girls. No offense, honey, but he always seemed a real mama's boy to me.

OPHELIA: Hamlet loves his mother.

RUBY: So did Oedipus.

OPHELIA: Well, he must have been a very good son, this Oedipus.

RUBY: And for a while, not a bad husband.

OPHELIA: Hamlet is just not too happy with his mother these days.

RUBY: What's his problem?

OPHELIA: He thinks she married his uncle too soon after his father's death.

RUBY: Oh really? He thinks the next day was too soon?

OPHELIA: Don't make jokes Ruby.

RUBY: Who's making jokes? They used the leftovers from the funeral to cater the wedding.

OPHELIA: Hamlet thinks there may have been something going on between Claudius and Gertrude even before.

RUBY: He thinks? He thinks? Hell, everybody in Elsinore knew Gertrude was steamin' up the sheets with Claudius.

OPHELIA: Well, I didn't know it.

RUBY: Are you blind, child? Even at the funeral, Claudius had his hand firmly planted on her royal ass. Have you thought of suggesting to the prince, that maybe he seek a little professional help. I mean... "I see dead people." Give me a friggin' break here.

OPHELIA: Ruby, what do you think I should do?

RUBY: What does your father say?

OPHELIA: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be."

RUBY: Why, does your old man think you're going into business with Prince Hamlet?

OPHELIA: No, that's just the way my father talks. "To thine own self be true and it follows as the night the day" ... yadada, yadada, yadada. (Ruby holds up a mirror in front of Ophelia) Oh Ruby, you're a dream.

RUBY: We are all such stuff as dreams are made on. And you can quote me on that .

OPHELIA: Ruby, if Hamlet doesn't ask me to marry him, I swear I'll kill myself.

RUBY: Now, now child... You musn't talk that way. You listen to Ruby. Men are like ferry boats. If you miss one, there'll be another one along in an hour. Now, run along... (Ophelia gives Ruby a hug and runs off.)

OPHELIA: Wish me luck.

RUBY: Luck. (to herself) You're gonna need it. (Calls out) Next. (From the opposite side of the stage Gertrude, Hamlet's mother enters.) Your majesty.

GERTRUDE: Rosie, how are you?

RUBY: Ruby.

GERTRUDE: What?

RUBY: Ruby... My name is Ruby, highness. Not Rosie.

GERTRUDE: Are you contradicting your queen?

RUBY: No, ma'am. I was merely pointing out...

GERTRUDE: One does not "point out" to their queen.

RUBY: Yes, your haughtiness. (Gertrude sits in the chair. Ruby drapes the smock over her.)  
Well, what'll it be today?

GERTRUDE: Just a touch up.

RUBY: Want me to do something with those roots?

GERTRUDE: I am the Queen. I do not have roots. I have transitions.

RUBY: Whatever you say. (she begins working on Gertrude) So, how are you majesty? I haven't seen you in here since just before your wedding.. I suppose congrats are in order.

GERTRUDE: Thank you, Rita.

RUBY: As well as condolences.

GERTRUDE: Condolences? What are you talking about?

RUBY: Condolences on the death of your husband.

GERTRUDE: Claudius is not dead. He is alive... Very much alive. In fact, we only just had....

RUBY: I meant your first husband, highness. The late king. The one before this one.

GERTRUDE: Oh... Him... Yes... The late king... Yes, of course... He is dead... And buried.

RUBY: Although still active from what I hear.

GERTRUDE: What are you talking about, Ruthie?

RUBY: Nothing, your grace. So everything is satisfactory with you and the new king?

GERTRUDE: Everything is very satisfactory, Rhonda.

RUBY: Happy to hear it.

GERTRUDE: Things couldn't be more satisfactory.

RUBY: That's good.

GERTRUDE: As a matter of fact, I can't remember when I have been so satisfied and on such a regular basis.

RUBY: Well, you go highness.

GERTRUDE: Are you married, Rhoda?

RUBY: Ruby.

GERTRUDE: Who's Ruby?

RUBY: Not important, majesty. And to answer your question... I was married once.

GERTRUDE: Was he a loving man?

RUBY: That's what every woman I caught him with said.

GERTRUDE: My first husband was not a loving man.

RUBY: I'm sorry to hear that ma'am.

GERTRUDE: In fact my late husband was a cold man. A very cold man.

RUBY: Couldn't be much colder than he is right now.

GERTRUDE: Perhaps there are women who prefer a man who pays them no attention... Leaves them completely alone... A man who never... how should put it...? A man who never...

RUBY: Shows them the respect and tenderness they deserve.

GERTRUDE: (Her voice drops an octave. Her breathing becomes heavy) Tenderness, shmenderness... I'm talking about a man who never slips them the high, hard one. Sweeps out the chimney... Threads the ole needle. Lays a little pipe now and then.

RUBY: Of course, majesty. What could I be thinking?

GERTRUDE: Indeed. Then along came Claudius.

RUBY: (*sings and does a little dance*) "Slow walkin' Claudius... Slow talkin' Claudius" (*Gertrude clears her throat. Ruby straightens up*) You're speaking, of course, of the new king. Your present husband. Your late husband's brother. Your son's new...

GERTRUDE: (*annoyed*) Yes, yes, yes. Claudius is different than his brother.

RUBY: For one thing, he's alive.

GERTRUDE: Claudius is warm.

RUBY: Warm is a good thing in a man.

GERTRUDE: He's considerate

RUBY: A rare trait these days.

GERTRUDE: And loving. Very, very, very, very, very loving.

RUBY: There's certainly a new glow in the royal cheeks.

GERTRUDE: I can tell you this because you are a woman Rachel. You are a woman?

RUBY: One hundred and ten percent.

GERTRUDE: With someone in your profession, one can't always be sure.

RUBY: Oh, you can be sure, your homophobicness.

GERTRUDE: When I am with him all I want to do is... How can I say it? All I want to do is...

RUBY: Enjoy his company. Rest in his arms. Bask in his adulation.

GERTRUDE: (*breathing heavily again*) Do the horizontal mambo... Excavate the tunnel of love. Clean the carpet... Parallel park... Ride the pony... Slurp the...

RUBY: I get the picture, your humpingness.

GERTRUDE: My son doesn't understand that.

RUBY: He's young. He'll learn.

GERTRUDE: Do you really think so?

RUBY: Give him time.

GERTRUDE: Perhaps you're right.

RUBY: Time heals all wounds.

GERTRUDE: How quaint. Is that what they call peasant wisdom?

RUBY: I suppose.

GERTRUDE: Maybe if he had someone in his life, he'd understand my need to... How should I say it?

RUBY: I think that lawn's already been mowed, your horniness. (Holds up a mirror for Gertrude) I think that's it.

GERTRUDE: Are you coming to the play tonight?

RUBY: What play is that your majesty?

GERTRUDE: Hamlet has commissioned a play to be performed in the castle tonight. It's called "The Moustrap." You must come.

RUBY: Thank you. But plays really ain't my thing. I like something with a little action... Somethin' I can get down with... Somethin'... How should I put it? Somethin' funky.

GERTRUDE: One does not turn down an invitation from her queen just because the subject doesn't rise, or sink, to the required level of... "funkiness"

RUBY: Yes, your superciliousness.

GERTRUDE: I'll leave two tickets for you at... "will call." (She exits)

RUBY: (*calls out*) Okay, send in the next sucker.

(*Claudius, The King, enters*)

CLAUDIUS: Ruby, Ruby, Ruby.

RUBY: King, King, King.



CLAUDIUS: Ruby, Ruby, Ruby

RUBY: King, King, King.

CLAUDIUS: You're a sight for sore eyes, Ruby.

RUBY: You're looking very regal, yourself.

CLAUDIUS: I'm feeling very regal.

RUBY: I haven't seen you since your coronation.

CLAUDIUS: Has it been that long Ruby?

RUBY: At least. Is it true what they say, highness?

CLAUDIUS: What's that, Ruby?

RUBY: That it's good to be the king.

CLAUDIUS: It doesn't suck. I can tell you that. The power... The wealth... The respect. But, mostly the power. God, I love the power... People stand when you walk into a room. They don't sit until you sit. They do what you tell them to do. They laugh at all your jokes. Ruby, right now, back in the castle, there are actually people lining up just to kiss my.....ring.

RUBY: So that's what all the bowin' is about.

CLAUDIUS: And the women. Ruby, I can't turn around without some beautiful woman offering me... Well, what beautiful women have to offer. You get the picture.

RUBY: In a frame.

CLAUDIUS: But, of course, I am faithful to the Queen.

RUBY: Of course.

CLAUDIUS: Completely faithful.

RUBY: Completely.

CLAUDIUS: Totally and completely faithful.

RUBY: Totally and completely faithful.

CLAUDIUS: One hundred per cent. Without a...

RUBY: What's her name?

CLAUDIUS: Annabella. She's a lady in waiting.

RUBY: Obviously, she ain't waitin' no more.

CLAUDIUS: Ruby, Ruby, Ruby

RUBY: King, King, King.

CLAUDIUS: I may be the king, Ruby...

RUBY: Here it comes.

CLAUDIUS: But, I am still a man.

RUBY: If you weren't a man, you wouldn't be the king.

CLAUDIUS: Exactly.

RUBY: You'd be the queen.

CLAUDIUS: You won't say anything about the... uh... (Ruby mimes zipping her lips shut) I knew I could count on you Ruby.

RUBY: Your usual trim, majesty?

CLAUDIUS: Please... *(He sits in the chair. She drapes a smock over him and begins to trim)* My stepson is putting on some cockamamie play tonight and his mother insists that I go.

RUBY: Then I'll see you there.

CLAUDIUS: You're going?

RUBY: Let's say the Queen extended me an invitation I couldn't refuse.

CLAUDIUS: Then there's no getting out of it for either of us. Do you have any children Ruby?

RUBY: None that I know of.

CLAUDIUS: What?

RUBY: It's a joke.

CLAUDIUS: Of course. A joke. No one tells me jokes anymore.

RUBY: That's too bad.

CLAUDIUS: They're afraid to be funnier than the king.

RUBY: Heavy lies the head that wears the crown.

CLAUDIUS: Very perceptive Ruby. Who said that?

RUBY: I just did.

CLAUDIUS: Oh.... My stepson hates me, Ruby.

RUBY: He's just a little confused.

CLAUDIUS: Confused? He's a fruitcake. But he still hates me for marrying his mother.

RUBY: *(under her breath)* Among other things.

CLAUDIUS: What's that?

RUBY: It's not easy for a child when one parent dies and the other re-marries... the next day.

CLAUDIUS: Perhaps we did rush things a tad. But, it's a cruel world out there for a woman by herself, without a man to protect her.

RUBY: I suppose. Only thing I know is the last man who said he was goin' to protect me, protected me right out of my life's savings.

CLAUDIUS: I couldn't leave my brother's widow alone.

RUBY: That's what I hear.

CLAUDIUS: And now her son wants to see me dead.

RUBY: Really? Dead? Hamlet?

CLAUDIUS: Those are the rumors. Have you heard anything Ruby? I'm sure people tell you things.

RUBY: Me? No... I haven't heard a thing... Not a thing.

CLAUDIUS: Here's my private number...*(gives her his card)* If you do hear anything, would you give me a call? You'd have the undying gratitude of a grateful king.

RUBY: *(taking Claudius's card)* If I hear anything. *(She takes the smock off)*

CLAUDIUS: Thank you Ruby. *(he starts to leave)* Oh, Ruby...

RUBY: Yes your majesty.

CLAUDIUS: Bring toothpicks.

RUBY: Excuse me?

CLAUDIUS: Bring toothpicks. For the play... To prop your eyes open... I hear Hamlet directed it... It's got to be real yawn... *(Mimicing Hamlet)* Maybe if you acted it this way... Perhaps if you played it that way... What if you entered from the right.... Or, you could always come in from the left... On the other hand... *(He exits)*

*(Hamlet enters. His hair is long and unkempt)*

HAMLET: To be or...

RUBY: Well, look what the cat dragged in.

*(Hamlet drops into Ruby's chair and slumps)*

RUBY: Sit up straight.

HAMLET: Why Ruby? Why sit up straight? Why not sit slumped forward? Or sit with one leg thrown over the arm...Perhaps with both...

RUBY: *(throws a smock over him)*. Knock it off and just sit up straight. You can't go to your own play tonight lookin' like this.

HAMLET: What difference does it make Ruby? Whether I look like this or I look like that... Just pull the whole thing back into a ponytail.

RUBY: Pony tail? Where have you been? Man, pony tails are so yesterday.

HAMLET: Yesterday... Today... Tomorrow...

RUBY: You need somethin' that says young, hip... now.

HAMLET: (*sarcastically*) How about big, thick sideburns down to here?

RUBY: I don't think so. You're a prince... Not "The King." (*does an Elvis move*)

HAMLET: What difference does it make what my hair looks like? A rogue and peasant slave am I.

RUBY: That may be but your hair says rogue and peasant "slob." You're a prince. You should look like one. Besides, there's nothing like a new 'do' to lift the clouds of doom. Raise the spirits. Boost the confidence.

HAMLET: And what do you suggest, Ruby? What could ever lift the clouds of doom that hover o'er my troubled brow?

RUBY: Bangs.

HAMLET: (*incredulously*) Bangs???

RUBY: Bangs

HAMLET: Certainly, you jest.

RUBY: Bangs are all the rage in England. From what I hear, Prince Valiant is beatin' 'em off with a stick.

HAMLET: Really? With a stick? Mmmmmm. "To have bangs or not to have bangs, that is the question."

RUBY: You're not gonna start that again, are you?

HAMLET: "Whether tis nobler to wear one's hair in a ponytail or to..."

RUBY: You keep that up and I'm gonna shave you bald.

HAMLET: (*intimidated*) Bangs it is.

RUBY: (*starts to work on Hamlet*) So, tell me about this play of yours.

HAMLET: Actually it's a ploy.

RUBY: A ploy?

HAMLET: To catch the conscience of the king.

RUBY: The ploy?

HAMLET: No, the play.

RUBY: But the play 's the thing to catch the conscience of the king?

HAMLET: No, that's the play.

RUBY: What's the play?

HAMLET: The Mousetrap.

RUBY: The Mousetrap?

HAMLET: Yes.

RUBY: What's a mouse trap have to do with this?

HAMLET: It's the play?

RUBY: The Mousetrap is the play.

HAMLET: Yes.

RUBY: Then what's the ploy?

HAMLET: The play.

RUBY: The ploy is the play.

HAMLET: Precisely. And the play is The Mousetrap.

RUBY: So, what you're saying is that the play is a ploy and the ploy is a play and the play is The Mousetrap.

HAMLET: Yes... And a play within a play.

RUBY: Excuse me.

HAMLET: The Mousetrap.

RUBY: What about The Mousetrap?

HAMLET: It's a play within a play.

RUBY: The Mousetrap is a play within a play.

HAMLET: That's what makes it a ploy.

RUBY: Let 's see if I have this straight. The play is a ploy and the ploy is a play and the play is a play within a play and it's the play within a play that makes the play a ploy.

HAMLET: But you musn't repeat that to anyone.

RUBY: I don't think I could if I wanted to. Does you girlfriend know about any of this?

HAMLET: What girlfriend? I don't have a girlfriend.

RUBY: Ophelia.

HAMLET: Ophelia? Is she still telling everyone she's my girlfriend?

RUBY: She thinks you're gonna pop the question?

HAMLET: What question?

RUBY: Well, it ain't "To be or not to be?" I can tell you that.

HAMLET: She thinks I'm going to ask her to marry me?

RUBY: That's what she thinks.

HAMLET: Where did she get the idea I wanted to marry her?

RUBY: Apparently from you.

HAMLET: I've got enough on my plate. My father's dead. My uncle is the king. And my mother is ...

RUBY: Let's not go there, okay?

HAMLET: The point is I don't need some girl mooning after me all the time. She should get her to a nunnery.

RUBY: What that girl is lookin' for she ain't gonna find in no nunnery.

HAMLET: She's not going to find it with me either.

RUBY: A bit of advice, if you don't mind me sayin' so. . . Let the child down easy. She's young, impressionable and highly strung.

HAMLET: Tell me about it. I've played lutes that weren't strung as tight.

RUBY: Just be careful.

HAMLET: It's not easy being me, Ruby.

RUBY: Right. Prince of the Realm. A killer job. Who'd ever want it?

HAMLET: Speaking of killer jobs, I may have to kill my uncle.

RUBY: "May" have to kill your uncle?

HAMLET: You must promise not to breathe a word of this to another soul.

RUBY: My lips are sealed.

HAMLET: You promise?

RUBY: If I'm lyin', I'm dyin' .

HAMLET: It's not a sure thing yet.

RUBY: Killing your uncle?

HAMLET: I have to be sure he actually murdered my father.

RUBY: You really think you're uncle murdered your father?

HAMLET: I'm not one hundred per cent positive...

RUBY: Of course, not.

HAMLET: But I have it from a very reliable source.

RUBY: A reliable source. And just who might that reliable source be?

HAMLET: My father.

RUBY: Your father. Yes... Old King Cuckold. Unless I read the wrong paper, your daddy is dead.

HAMLET: To be precise, it was my father's ghost who told me.

RUBY: Your father's ghost talked to you.

HAMLET: That's right.

RUBY: Are you sure it wasn't just some of your college buddies punkin' you?

HAMLET: That is in the realm of possibility.

RUBY: So there's a chance you won't kill your uncle.

HAMLET: Right now it's about fifty fifty.

RUBY: Fifty fifty.

HAMLET: I wouldn't want to rush into it.

RUBY: Of course not. You're Hamlet.

HAMLET: I mean, what if he didn't murder my father?

RUBY: Right. What if?

HAMLET: Then I'd be killing him for nothing.

RUBY: And you wouldn't want to kill your uncle based on bad intelligence.

HAMLET: But, what if he did kill my father?

RUBY: That's a whole other kettle of ifs.

HAMLET: And then there's the matter of justice.

RUBY: Oh yeah... Justice... Can't forget justice.

HAMLET: Ruby, do I have a right to take his life because he took my father's life?

RUBY: I just do hair. Revenge killin' ain't part of the job description.

HAMLET: On the other hand...

RUBY: Here we go.

HAMLET: I mean I am obligated to revenge my father's death if he was, indeed, murdered.

RUBY: But, conscience does make cowards of us all.

HAMLET: Wow. I never thought of that. (to himself) Conscience does make cowards of us all. Yes, I could blame the whole thing on my conscience. Then I wouldn't have to do anything.

RUBY: It's a thought.

HAMLET: I ask you Ruby, does any man have the right to take another man's life under any circumstances? (Ruby starts to reply, but Hamlet continues) But, he is the king and if I don't render justice, who will? (Ruby takes out her cell phone and dials) But, if that king attained his crown by raising his sword against his king?

RUBY: (*into phone*) Your highness? Ruby here...

HAMLET: But to raise a sword against your own king is the highest crime one can commit.

RUBY: You know that matter with your stepson... You asked me to call if I heard anything...

HAMLET: I mean, can two wrongs ever make a right?

RUBY: If I were you I wouldn't worry about a thing.

HAMLET: Does a right and wrong make a right.?

RUBY: Trust me... You have as much chance of bein' whacked by your stepson and I do becomin' the queen of friggin' England.

HAMLET: Can two rights make a wrong?

RUBY: No problem, King.

HAMLET: To be or not to be, that is the question.

RUBY: What's that? Oh yeah... Wouldn't miss it...

HAMLET: Whether tis nobler to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. (Hamlet stands and wanders off still wearing the smock)  
Or rise up against a sea of bubbles... A sea of puddles... A sea of doubles... A sea of cuddles...

RUBY: (*into phone*) Save me a seat. (*Ruby clicks off her phone*) Who's next?

(*The Ghost enters*)

GHOST: Looks like I'm next.

RUBY: King Hamlet.

GHOST: You're not surprised to see me Ruby?

RUBY: Around here, nothin' surprises me.

GHOST: The sight of a dead man walking has a tendency to frighten most people.



RUBY: Well, I ain't most people.

GHOST: No, you're not Ruby... You're the last honest person in Denmark.

RUBY: Which ain't sayin' much, when you get right down to it.

GHOST: *(drops into Ruby's chair)* What am I going to do Ruby?

RUBY: We could trim the front... Layer the back a little... Disguise the bald spot.

GHOST: I'm talking about my family. My brother murdered me. My wife took him into her bed before my body was even cold... My son won't avenge my death.

RUBY: What family doesn't have its problems?

GHOST: You think Gertrude and Claudius had something going on before he poured the poison in my ear?

RUBY: I wouldn't know your majesty.

GHOST: And if you did, you wouldn't tell me. Would you?

RUBY: What's said at Ruby's...

GHOST: Stays at Ruby's. I know... I could have used ministers like you Ruby. People who know how to keep their mouths shut. Unlike my son.

RUBY: Hamlet is young, highness.

GHOST: He's thirty two years old, Ruby... When I was thirty two I'd conquered half a dozen neighboring tribes, imprisoned two thousand warriors, killed God knows how many more and impregnated five hundred of their women.

RUBY: You were a doer, majesty.

GHOST: If my father's brother had killed my father and married my mother, I would've roasted the bastard over a spit. I'd've fed his innards to the pigs.  
I'd've ...

RUBY: Each generation has its own way of handlin' conflict.

GHOST: I'd've had his head on a pike. I'd've severed his limbs... And can you really disguise the bald spot?

RUBY: Oh sure... No problem.

GHOST: Give it a shot... *(Ruby goes to work)* So how are things with you, Ruby?

RUBY: Can't complain.

GHOST: Still seeing that rope maker?

RUBY: No... Couldn't get him to tie the knot.

GHOST: That's the trouble with young people today. No sense of commitment. Take my son, for instance. "To be or not to be?" What's the problem? Just stab the sonofabitch. Did I ever tell you about the time I killed three men with one thrust of my sword?

RUBY: Yes, your majesty... Many times.

GHOST: It was at the battle of ... Of... Of... Death is hell on the memory, Ruby... Well, anyway... There they were. All lined up in a nice, neat row.

*(Having heard the story a hundred times before, Ruby mouths the Ghost's tale word for word as the... LIGHTS FADE)*

CURTAIN