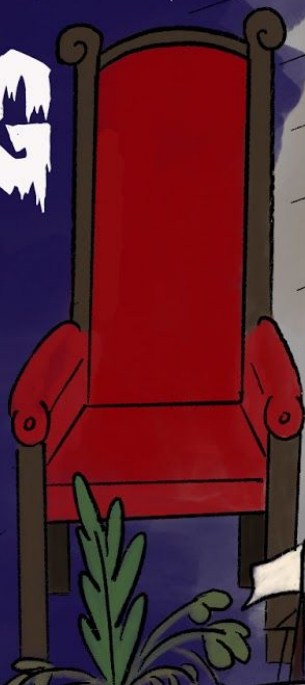GHOST KING
S.A.L.A.D. #1
SCOTT ADAMS LITERARY ADVENTURE DIVERSIONS

Your father is dead and you're sure your uncle is responsible. You tried to tell your mother so. Instead of believing you, she married him. Now you're going to uncover the truth and set things right...

Type a two-word command when the computer asks "Tell me what to do?" The first word is always a verb - a word you use to do something. The second word should indicate a direction or object. Suppose, for example, you are in a dark room and the computer says "IT'S DARK HERE. I CAN'T SEE. WHAT SHALL I DO?" If you are carrying a torch, you can light it by typing LIGHT TORCH and then press [RETURN].

Some (but not all!) of the words you might find useful are:

Buy	Examine	Inventory	Quit	Talk
Clap	Give	Kill	Read	Take
Drop	Go	Look	Save Game	Trick

Hamlet is an intelligent hero. Sometimes you can TRICK your way out of trouble. Make your point sometimes with a loud YELL! And sometimes a SOLILOQUY is best. You may learn other ways to use brains over brawn from people of Elsinore. TALK to them! Some even like acts of kindness!

Hamlet is also a trained fighter and has the power to KILL! But he must be careful. Guards are everywhere! And some spaces are protected and holy.

The following single letter commands are allowed:
N S E W U D : Go North, South, East, West, Up or Down
I   : Take Inventory of what you are carrying
L   : Look around and see what's there
X (THING) : Examine a THING. Not all things have descriptions.

If you use a command that the computer can't perform or doesn't understand, it will say I CAN'T DO THAT or I DON'T UNDERSTAND. When this happens, try thinking of another way to say it or try making a verb out of the action. You'll also discover that most objects can be picked up using the last word of their names. For example, to pick up a blue ox, type GET OX. Normally you can only do things to objects that are either visible or that you are carrying.

Your microcomputer may support other features such as RESTORE GAME. Other microcomputers only allow you to restore a saved game at startup. Please consult your microcomputer-specific reference card if one was included in your GHOST KING packaging.

June 2020

Contemporary notes for GHOST KING (aka ROTTEN ADVENTURE)

This project addresses a puzzle that's been bugging me for a long time: early text adventures frequently drew on fantasy novels and fantastical tropes, and borrowed from other popular genres like science fiction and mystery. But the single most popular author in the public domain, William Shakespeare, was barely touched. Why?

I've attempted to answer that question for myself. Using Mike Taylor's ScottKit compiler I set myself the challenge: "What if Scott Adams *had* done a Hamlet game?" So, embracing the limitations of that premise (including but certainly not limited to an authentically lax approach to proofreading) I sat down with a couple of Hamlet scripts and got to work. Between the power of ScottKit and the clear story beats laid out by Shakespeare, I had the working frame of the game within a week. Testers played a valuable role in helping me flesh out the world a bit and find opportunities to expand on puzzles. And now you have your opportunity to judge.

In a sense, the project is its own answer: *Oh.* **This** *is why not.*

And yet, I'm not so sure this would not, in fact, have been one of 1980's hottest-selling games had it been given a chance. And I'm already working on S.A.L.A.D. #2. Stay tuned.

About [Robin Johnson's Hamlet](): I was vaguely aware of other contemporary Shakespeare and Hamlet-specific games, but hadn't played any of them before starting this project (and at press time, still have not.) I did fire up this edition to get a quick feel for it, and the differences are immediately apparent. He's going for a mid-1980s Infocom aesthetic, while GHOST KING S.A.L.A.D. #1 most definitely shipped in 1980 in little more than a fancy plastic bag.

Credits:

Hamlet by William Shakespeare. Texts used include those found on MIT, Open Source Shakespeare, and the Sudden Shakespeare: Hamlet edit by Lennox Forrester
Game by Jason Compton
Created with ScottKit and trizbort.io
Cover art by Robin Gee
Thank you to the testing crew: J.J. Guest, Laura B.K., Henrik Åsman, Karona, Mike Carletta, ahope1, Dokken, pdxiv. Special thanks to ahope1 for the Netlify deployment.
Thank you to the intfiction.org community including game testers, lft, and Draconis for rallying around the occasional quirks and suggesting suitable workarounds.

If you enjoyed this irreverent take on classic theater please consider following the work of [Madison Shakespeare Company]() and [Falconbridge Players](). And follow me [@jpcwrites]().