

Sinking the Globe

By Tony Howell

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DEDICATION

To Cathy Knopp, an amazing teacher, a huge fan of the Bard and a true friend to many people. This woman not only inspired this script, designed the original set and helped choose the many Shakespearean excerpts, but was also slated to direct the show before her untimely passing. The playwright and the premiere cast made this show a work of love and tribute to a woman who dedicated her life to her students and the stage. You are sorely missed every day, Cathy.

STORY OF THE PLAY

When Shakespeare is forced to leave the Globe Theatre for the day, his wife, Anne, embarks on a power trip that causes great confusion backstage. To make matters worse, Shakespeare's older daughter, Susanna, is falling in love with one of the actors, while the younger daughter, Judith, is trying to ferret out the spy that is trying to sabotage her father's theatre. After chases, swordfights, kidnappings and mixed up versions of "Romeo and Juliet," "Taming of the Shrew," "Comedy of Errors" and "Julius Caesar," Shakespeare returns and, with a little outside help, all's well that ends well!

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

SINKING THE GLOBE received its premiere production at Central Noble High School in Albion, Indiana on April 23rd (Shakespeare's birthday), 2009. The original cast was as follows:

Richard Tarleton-Casey Symons; Nicholas Tooley-Benjamin Pearson; Richard Burbage-Dan Ober; William Shakespeare-Ryan Petrie; Henry Condell-Mychael Diehl; John Heminges-Trenton Barcus; Margery Bristol-Tiffany Renkenberger; Nat Fields-Ryan Cureton; Margaret Osteller-Carrie Carpenter; Liza Smith-Katie Craft; John Lowin-Jacob Agler; William Sly-Kyle Wagner; Maggie Potter-Carmen Metzger; Richard Armin (Snuff)-Bradley Wilkinson; Lucy White-Ashlynn Johnson; Susanna Shakespeare-Kate Reidenbach; Anne Shakespeare-Kalyn Sprague; Judith Shakespeare-Katie Beam; Agnes Prowd-Sami Allred; John Cholmley-Derek Leatherman; Katherine Cholmley-Brandy Buchanan; Jane Chandler-Kayla Busche; Joan Chandler-Kara Busche; Stage Managers-Ty Goodrich and Cody Steele.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11 m, 12 w, plus any number of female fans)

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*RICHARD BURBAGE: The star actor.

*JOHN HEMINGES: Financial manager and actor.

*HENRY CONDELL: Heminges' apprentice, played women.

JOHN LOWIN: Specialized in villains, once worked at Rose.

ROBERT ARMIN: (Snuff) comic actor.

WILLIAM SLY: Played Tybalt and Hotspur.

NICHOLAS TOOLEY: Young actor, Romeo character.

NAT FIELD: Thirteen-year-old apprentice.

RICHARD TARLTON: Fencing master, actor.

JOHN CHOLMLEY: Grocer, part owner of the Rose Theatre.

*The owners of the Globe.

ANNE HATHAWAY SHAKESPEARE: Shakespeare's wife.

SUSANNA SHAKESPEARE: Shakespeare's elder daughter.

JUDITH SHAKESPEARE: Shakespeare's younger daughter.

AGNES PROWD: The costumer.

LUCY WHITE: The props girl.

KATHERINE CHOLMLEY: Wife of John Cholmley.

MARGERIE BRISTOL: The stage manager.

MARGARET OSTELLER: One of the two cleaning ladies.

MAGGIE POTTER: Serving girl from the Mermaid's Tavern.

LIZA SMITH: Cleaning lady, (Elizabeth I in disguise)

JANE CHANDLER: Fan who is in love with Burbage.

JOAN CHANDLER: Her sister also in love with Burbage.

FANS: Any number of female Burbage fans may also be used. The original production used about fifteen extra women to run around and scream with Jane and Joan Chandler. This worked very well and the "groupies" as they were called, became one of the most popular characters in the show. It is recommended to use several other females to expand on the groupies whenever possible.

WHO PLAYS WHAT PART IN WHICH SHOW?

The numbers following the character/role indicate which play. Underlined roles indicate that there should be a costume for that part separate from what the actor normally wears.

- (1) *As You Like It*
- (2) *Romeo and Juliet*
- (3) *Taming Of The Shrew*
- (4) *Julius Caesar*
- (5) *Comedy of Errors*
- (6) *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

William Shakespeare: Adam (1)

Richard Burbage: Duke (1), Friar (2), Brutus (4)

John Heminges: Hortensio (3), Caesar (4)

Henry Condell: Kate (3), Senator (4), Adriana (5)

John Lowin: Le Beau (1), Jacques (1), Petruchio (3), Senator (4)

Robert Armin: Grumio (3), Soothsayer (4), Dromio (5)

William Sly: Tybalt (1), Abram (1), Senator (4), Marc Antony (4), Antipholus (5)

Nicholas Tooley: Orlando (1), Romeo (2), Casca (4), Antipholus (5)

Richard Tarlton: Charles (1), Mercutio (2), Sampson (2), Senator (4), Dromio (5)

Nat Fields: Puck (6)

WHO IS IN WHAT FIGHT?

Fight #1 is the wrestling match from *As You Like It* and only involves Tarlton and Tooley.

Fight #2 is the sword fight between Tybalt and Mercutio from *Romeo and Juliet*. It only involves Tarlton and Sly.

Fight #3 is the big fistfight at the end of Act I and involves six men-- Heminges, Condell, Lowin, Armin, Sly and Tarlton.

Fight #4 is the fencing demonstration/sword fight that Tarlton, Sly and Tooley use to entertain the audience before the show.

Fight #5 is the fistfight between Sly and Tooley.

***See additional production notes at the end of the script.**

ACT I

(AT RISE: NICHOLAS TOOLEY is playing Orlando from "As You Like It." He is already shirtless. RICHARD TARLTON is playing Charles the Wrestler. BURBAGE, HEMINGES, CONDELL, LOWIN, ARMIN, SLY and NAT make up the crowd for the scene. The scene is not very well done and seems to lack life and real energy, especially with Tooley and the wrestling sequence. Orlando is warming up and stretching as Charles enters, shedding his shirt, with Burbage and Armin behind him.)

TARLTON AS CHARLES: Come! Where is this young gallant that is so desirous to lie with his mother earth?

TOOLEY AS ORLANDO: Ready, sir, but his will hath in it a more modest working.

BURBAGE AS THE DUKE: You shall try but one fall.

TARLTON AS CHARLES: No, I warrant your grace, you shall not entreat him to a second that have so mightily persuaded him from a first.

TOOLEY AS ORLANDO: You mean to mock me after. You should not have mocked me before. But come, your ways.

(THEY wrestle. It's obvious that it's choreographed and not very well rehearsed yet. It's slow and not smooth. The OTHERS stand around uttering only a scattered cheer here and there. It's actually a bad and boring fight. Finally, TARLTON AS CHARLES is thrown.)

BURBAGE AS THE DUKE: No more! No more!

SHAKESPEARE: *(From the audience.)* My sentiments exactly! Please! No more!

(SHAKESPEARE enters from the audience where he has been watching and directing the rehearsal. He moves on to the stage while the rest of the TROUPE stands there waiting expectantly. They know it wasn't good.)

SHAKESPEARE: *(Cont'd.)* What was that? Because it wasn't a fight! A fight should have a bit of excitement and suspense to it. I mean, there wasn't one believable moment in the whole thing.

BURBAGE: It was awful, Tarlton. You usually stage much better fights.

SHAKESPEARE: Don't yell at him too much, Burbage. You weren't much above the level of garbage yourself.

BURBAGE: What! How dare you, Will! I swear that--

HEMINGES: Calm down, Richard! We all know he's right. It was terrible.

BURBAGE: Well, part of the problem is this script. I swear, Will, it's not up to your usual standards.

SHAKESPEARE: This is nothing wrong with the words, but you have to give it a chance. Breathe some life into it, my friends. Pick up the pace of the fight, and Nicholas, you act like you're afraid of hurting Tarlton. Go after him. He's the fight master. If anyone can take care of himself, he's the one. Now, remember, you despise Charles. He made fun of you in front of the entire court. Take it out on him. And the rest of you, get into it a little bit. I want constant noise from the bystanders. If you don't think it's exciting, the audience surely won't.

TOOLEY: I got it this time, Will. I know what you want.

CONDELL: We're obviously not ready to do the show this afternoon. We'll just have to do something else. Let's do "Much Ado." It's always a crowd pleaser.

HEMINGES: We haven't done a new work in months. It's no wonder that the Rose is still more popular than we are. Henslowe seems to have a new show every fortnight.

SHAKESPEARE: This one is ready. You just need to commit to it. Really attack it and you'll see. It'll all come together.

(SHAKESPEARE moves back into the audience. ACTORS reposition themselves and really seem to be concentrating. Once all is nearly set, Shakespeare yells from the audience.)

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SHAKESPEARE: *(Cont'd.)* All right. Start at "You mean to mock me," Nicholas.

TOOLEY AS ORLANDO: *(The scene restarts. HE is a bit angrier this time.)* You mean to mock me after. You should not have mocked me before. But come your ways!

(Just as the MEN start to wrestle, MARGERY comes running in. She goes to run between the two men just as TOOLEY rushes towards TARLTON. She ducks and barely gets through in time. She runs on up to the front of the stage looking out into the house for Shakespeare.)

SHAKESPEARE: Stop! Stop! Stop!

(ACTORS stop, SHAKESPEARE rushes up to the stage.)

MARGERY: I'm sorry, Master Shakespeare, but Augustine is not here yet and I sent a boy round to his place like you said, but he just got back and there was no one there.

SHAKESPEARE: Well, where the devil is he? *(Looks to ACTORS.)* Anyone know where Augustine was going last night?

(General response of "No idea," etc.)

NAT: I heard him say something about supper.

SHAKESPEARE: Have the boy start making the rounds of the taverns, Margery. Maybe we'll get lucky.

MARGERY: Right away!

(MARGERY vanishes backstage and SHAKESPEARE heads back to the house.)

SHAKESPEARE: All right. Get ready. Start at the same place, Nicholas.

TOOLEY AS ORLANDO: *(The scene restarts. HE is even angrier this time.)* You mean to mock me after. You should not have mocked me before. But come your ways!

End of Freeview

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