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# O, For a Muse of Fire: An Experiment in Teaching Shakespeare's Plays to Elementary School Students

Jennifer Susan Horn

*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

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UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Jennifer Horn

College: Arts and Sciences Department: English and Theatre

Faculty Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT TITLE: O, For A Muse of Fire: An Experiment in Teaching Shakespeare's Plays to Elementary School Students

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: D. Allen Carroll, Faculty Mentor

Date: April 23, 1999

Comments (Optional):

Jen - I have a marked-up copy, if you care for it. Admire your enthusiasm for Shakespeare @ the little nippers. I'd drop those 4<sup>th</sup> grades fast. Nice mix of kinds of activities. Now whatever do I do with this form?

Allen Carroll

## Elementary Shakespeare

Many people view William Shakespeare's plays as high culture and think his language is as foreign as Greek. However, Shakespeare wrote for many different people, so that both high-brow and low-brow audience members can equally enjoy his works. In that tradition, a growing number of people today feel that teaching Shakespeare to children can be both enjoyable and beneficial. Exposing children to theatre in general can greatly increase their creativity, and Shakespeare gives them both new ideas to work with and a new language in which to express themselves. (It's amazing how much fun they can have with all the *thees* and *thous*!)

I was given time working with fourth and fifth graders (separately) in the Talented and Gifted program at New Hopewell Elementary School in two blocks of one-hour sessions held a week apart. The first week, I concentrated on the language of Shakespeare, taking the Prologue from *Henry V* line by line, explaining and asking them questions about it. After we completed that as a class, they were rewarded with a game called "Finger Fencing," in which they divided into pairs and spoke lines of dialogue (from *Macbeth*) to each other, ending in a sword fight with fingers instead of blades. To get an idea of how much they absorbed, I gave them a crossword puzzle filled with vocabulary words taken from the speech we worked on in class. The second week, I showed them various aspects of Shakespeare in performance, including actors (in person) doing a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a video of *Much Ado About Nothing*, a speech from *As You Like It*, and, finally, letting the kids themselves act out the first witches' scene from *Macbeth*. They were then given a worksheet in which they had to match a series of Shakespearean phrases with the proper meanings.

In my paper, I will discuss the differences between the reactions of the two age groups as well as which aspects of the program worked best and how I can modify and improve the parts that were not as well-received.

# O, For A Muse of Fire:

An Experiment in Teaching Shakespeare's  
Plays to Elementary School Students

Jennifer Horn  
Senior Honors Project  
Spring 1999

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## Introduction

I decided on my career almost two years ago, during one of the many crises in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). I was frustrated, as always, that our nation does not realize the effect of the humanities on society. Rather than just complaining, though, I decided that I wanted to actually do something, on some level at least, to correct this problem of our nation ignoring the arts. No short-term way of solving the problem exists; our only hope is that the next generation will feel differently than this one does. The only solution is to work with children and help to instill them with a sense of respect for the arts. More than that, though, kids need to learn how much fun art, music, literature, and theatre can be and how much we can learn about both ourselves and others through these media.

My primary interests lie in theatre and literature, and more specifically in the plays of Shakespeare. However, I have arrived at this point in my life despite my introduction to Shakespeare in school rather than because of it. Of all his plays that we studied -- *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* -- I was only able to truly enjoy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Perhaps I felt that way because the rest of the plays included the deaths of almost all the characters; perhaps it was because that play (*MND*) came after the others, and I had grown used to the language; and perhaps it was because it was treated less like a sacred work of great literature and more like a fallible, yet well-written comedy. I have come to love almost all of Shakespeare's plays, but I also realize that few people would have taken the time to peel back layers and look at them as works of art that can have flaws as well as brilliance. I want to help other people have a better initial response to Shakespeare than I did, so that they will look forward to reading or watching more.

Several important facts should be acknowledged by any potential student of Shakespeare. First, the plays are not far removed from our lives. They involve themes and stories that have become common through reuse, and are easily recyclable because of the truths inherent in them. They should never be held as "high literature" or as anything else that implies that they are above the reader/watcher. The plays were written for people from all levels of society, not an elite group. That fact should be emphasized at all times. Second, Shakespeare had a great sense of humor. Even in the tragedies, he tries to balance grief with comedy. That fact seems to be left out quite often when people try to cover the plays in too short a period of time. Lastly, children relate much better to comedy than tragedy. I believe that they should be introduced to Shakespeare's language, which can be quite complicated, by using his comedies, which are just as well-written as the tragedies that are more widely known. This way, the child is not dealt the triple-blow of having to deal with the language and the moral questions as well as the complex themes that are inherent in his tragedies. My goal is to create a program using these three ideas that will make Shakespeare and his plays interesting and fun for younger students.

A long-term benefit of this type of program is that children will grow into adults who would enjoy spending a night at the theatre watching a play instead of seeing a movie or watching television, and would be more concerned about the future of the arts. But for now, I am content if a child merely looks forward to studying Shakespeare in high school or college because he once had a class about Shakespeare that was "pretty neat." My goal for this project was to create a lesson plan that will expose children to some of the best aspects of Shakespeare, make them at least partly comfortable with his language, and show them how much fun his plays can be. I worked with children from New Hopewell Elementary School's Talented and Gifted program (fourth-graders and fifth-graders in separate classes) in two one-hour sessions held a week apart.

## Statement of Purpose

I will introduce the plays of William Shakespeare to two classes of Talented and Gifted (T.A.G.) students at New Hopewell Elementary School, showing them that these plays can be fun and are not impossible to understand.



## Week One

For my first session, I ended up with three major sections: an introduction to both Shakespeare and the theatre, looking at the prologue from *Henry V* line by line to get used to Shakespeare's language, and an activity called "finger-fencing," which gives kids a chance to speak Shakespeare's words in a relaxed situation. As they left the class, they were handed a crossword puzzle that used vocabulary words from the speech in *Henry V*. I had another speech prepared in case we had extra time, but everything fit perfectly in the one-hour time period.

My first objective was to introduce theatre in general. I started by asking the kids if they had ever been to a play. Quite a few of the fourth-graders had not, while the fifth-graders had seen one as a field trip. I started talking about what makes the theatre unique from television and the movies. The key? The audience has to use its imagination much more at a play. Also, the audience is very important to a play, with performances varying slightly based on the viewers' response, whereas a movie or television show that is taped with either no audience or one group of people in attendance never changes with different viewers. These can be hard concepts to grasp, but I thought that the kids, and the fifth-graders in particular, understood the basic ideas.

We then moved on to Shakespeare in particular. Several of the fourth-graders and most of the fifth-graders had at least heard of Shakespeare, even if they did not know exactly who he was. When I mentioned one play that he had written -- *Romeo and Juliet* -- all of their eyes glowed with recognition. (Baz Luhrman's movie version that premiered several years ago, and its Romeo in particular [Leonardo di Caprio], had introduced the story to many teenagers and pre-teens. Even if the kids in this class had not seen the movie, they at least knew its story.) I then told them that Shakespeare had written almost forty plays, named some of the other famous titles, and saw recognition in several of

the children's faces. Next, I told them that Shakespeare lived four-hundred years ago, which surprised many of them. I told them to imagine television shows like *Rugrats* or *The Simpsons*, or movies like *Jurassic Park* or *Star Wars*, still being watched and enjoyed four hundred years from now. They giggled and agreed that something would have to be very special and important to last that long. Shakespeare wrote for his audience, showing them blood and gore, witches, and exotic places, I told the children. If he were alive today, I said, I have no doubt that he would be writing major blockbusters set in outer space, sweeping epics, and hit comedies.

I next addressed the issue of Shakespeare's language. I warned them that the Elizabethan language could be hard to understand, but to keep trying because one eventually gets used to it. They had to learn some basic Shakespearean vocabulary before we could begin with an actual text: "thee" means "you", "o'er" is an abbreviation of "over", and "tis" is simply "it is." Armed with this knowledge, we then marched boldly into the Prologue of *Henry V*.

I chose this speech, which opens the play *Henry V*, because the Chorus is calling on the audience to use their imagination and forgive the players when they failed to do justice to the mighty characters that they attempted to play. He asks, "when we talk of horses, [think] that you see them / Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth" (Prologue 26-27). In other words, use your imagination to fill in details that we cannot. I read the speech line by line, stopping frequently to ask the class what they thought each passage meant and explaining it if they did not understand. For both classes, I spent twenty to thirty minutes on this speech, making sure that they knew what was going on. After I was done with the line-by-line method, I read the speech through in its entirety. The end product was amazing: even if they did not understand everything, they were at least able to follow the basic ideas, and I could see their interest and understanding in their faces.

I was amazed by the difference between the fourth- and fifth-graders. The fourth-graders were interested and tried hard, but just could not grasp much more than the broad concepts. The fifth-graders, however, were an entirely different story. As we went through the *Henry V* speech, they were able to understand quite a bit with no assistance from me. Even on the sections that were harder, they required fewer explanations than their younger counterparts. When I reread the speech, I looked around at the kids' faces, watching their eyes. I could tell even then, before I asked them, that they had understood. And as corny as it sounds, that was one of the best moments of my life.

Both groups greatly enjoyed finger-fencing. I felt that the activity was a nice reward for their patience and attentiveness, while exposing the children to another aspect of Shakespeare's plays -- the rapier fights. I explained to the class that many people in Elizabethan times came to the theatre primarily to watch the incredible fights featuring the Italian rapiers. English broadswords were heavy and bulky, making flashy swordplay next to impossible, but the Italian rapiers were light and compact enough to enable fighters to move about more and parry for longer amounts of time. These new swords lent themselves perfectly to the stage, where duels became intricate and fascinating to the audience, who could see these rapiers nowhere else. I told the children, Shakespeare included many duels in his plays, from *Romeo and Juliet* to *Hamlet* to *Macbeth*, from which play our particular exercise comes.

The class was divided in half, with each child having a partner in the other group. The first group was given the line, "Obey and go with me, for thou must die!" The second group then answered back: "Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!" We repeated the lines as a class until the children had them memorized. As soon as that was accomplished, we quickly talked about what the lines meant. I translated them into modern speech: "Come with me, 'cause you're fish food!" and "Are you talkin' to me? Then give me your best shot!" They then commenced fighting, having been cautioned

against poking each other (you could win only by lightly touching your finger/sword to your opponent's back) and told to relish a "death scene" as much as a victory, as well as being warned not to step on "dead bodies." The kids did a great job of following those rules, though they got carried away and were a bit loud.

I left the school with a sense of accomplishment -- I had made a definite connection with the children and I think that they learned a great deal. My head was spinning with ideas for the next week, and I wished that I had even more time to explore Shakespeare with these kids. I also felt as though I made the right choice for my future career; I could easily see myself doing this for the rest of my life. My favorite part was seeing the spark in the children's eyes when they first understood the language and realized that the plays were not impossible to comprehend after all. I looked forward to the next time I could watch that process take place.

## Week Two

My second week was also a success, but not such a life-changing experience. I brought in a group of Theatre students from UT to present a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, performed a humorous speech from *As You Like It*, showed a scene from Kenneth Branagh's movie version of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and then split the class into groups of three so that they could perform the first scene from *Macbeth* -- the meeting of the witches. I thought that these activities would take up the full hour of class time. However, both groups had at least fifteen minutes left of class when we finished these scenes. The kids were happy, though, because we got to do finger-fencing again. Also, the fifth-graders wanted to watch more of *Much Ado About Nothing*, so I showed them three more short scenes so that they could observe Beatrice and Benedick's early bickering, and see them as a happy couple later in the story.

The scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I Scene II, contains a bumbling group of men trying to put on a play. They go about everything the wrong way, but are guided by a slightly-informed leader, Peter Quince, who assigns the parts. Another of the men, Bottom, is determined to play all of the parts himself. The other characters consist of a man who is forced to play Thisbe (a fair maiden) and another man who is relieved to play a lion because he will not have to memorize any lines. By showing such a clueless group that does everything wrong, Shakespeare indirectly tells how plays should work. This scene is a perfect choice both because of the broad humor and what it teaches about the theatre. Our version of the scene used non-traditional casting -- three women and a man instead of four men. This change, however, gave me a chance to tell the students that women were not allowed on the Elizabethan stage and that boys dressed up as women to play the female parts. Our casting was in keeping with that tradition, just flip-flopping guys dressing as girls to girls dressing as guys. I also used the opportunity to talk

more about having to use your imagination to believe what is supposed to be happening on the stage.

The second part of the day's program was a short speech from *As You Like It*. Phoebe, the character who is speaking, has been followed by a love-struck shepherd named Silvius. She is replying to his accusation that the way she looked at him (with no love whatsoever) would kill him. I picked a boy from each class to be Silvius to my Phoebe - he did not have to talk, but I needed someone to play opposite me. I asked for volunteers before telling the class anything about the scene (I picked the one boy who didn't raise his hand in the first class, and one who did volunteer for the second -- both ways worked well). Everyone got a big laugh when I announced that the chosen volunteer's job was to act hopelessly in love with me. Basically, Phoebe tells Silvius that he's crazy if he thinks that her eyes can hurt him. She gets frustrated with him, and says, "You know, let's just say you're right and I can destroy you with a look. Here, I'll give it my best shot!" She then proceeds to give him the meanest look she can possibly muster and acts surprised that he is still alive, or at the very least not struck unconscious by the sheer force of her look. She ends by saying, basically, "I told you my eyes couldn't hurt you!" The basic point of doing this speech, other than for its humor value, was to show the kids that Shakespeare, who is so well-known for the lovey-dovey poetry of *Romeo and Juliet*, is capable of laughing at himself and making fun of romance. I think that the boys in particular liked this speech a lot.

I think that it is very important for the children to see Shakespeare done well, so I brought in the Kenneth Branagh version of *Much Ado About Nothing*. I was torn in this decision because I wanted to emphasize the choice of theatre as an alternative to movies and television, but in the end I decided that it was much more important for them to see excellent actors making the characters come alive. The music and the actions which came from the director rather than the script added a great deal, as well, letting the children

further into the mood and world of the play. The fourth-graders enjoyed the clip I showed them, but they did not understand quite enough to keep their attention focused for very long. The fifth-graders, as I said before, were a much different story. Because we had plenty of time, I let them watch the scene immediately following the first that I had selected. That first scene, by the way, was from Act II Scene III, where Benedick hears his friends talking about how much Beatrice loves him. Two facts of the plot make this scene interesting: first, the friends are purposefully talking where they know he will hear them because they are trying to set him up with Beatrice, who is as ignorant about any feelings she may have toward Benedick as he is about any toward her; and second, Benedick and Beatrice always argue and engage in a war of words whenever they are together. Basically, in this scene, we see Benedick go from hating Beatrice to loving her, and he is transformed from laughing at anyone in love to being the object of his own scorn. The second scene, which I showed to the fifth-graders, is Beatrice going through the same process with some of her friends, and deciding that she, too, will be in love. Neither of these scenes is "mushy" or too sentimental because humor is blended in constantly. The fact that Denzel Washington, an actor who is famous for a wide range of roles, was in the clip helped as well, because the kids can see that actors more known for mainstream movies also enjoy being in Shakespeare's plays (much like them seeing Leonardo di Caprio and Claire Danes in *Romeo and Juliet*).

Now that the children had seen live actors doing a scene and watched a movie version of a Shakespeare play, the last planned activity was for them to act in a scene. I chose the witches from *Macbeth* because they have a fun way of speaking and their words are not all that hard to understand. I originally wanted to use the famous "Double double toil and trouble" Cauldron scene, but I found way too many parts that I would have to edit because of content before I could show the scene to the kids, and by that time, much of the language was gone. I thus decided too use a different scene, where fewer changes

would be required. I ended up choosing the first scene of the play, where they meet and set up the dark and mysterious tone of the play. The scene is very short -- only twelve lines -- so it is just long enough for the students to have the experience of speaking the language without much pressure, and short enough for them to add in any "special effects" like flying around or using weird or scary voices. With the actors from the *Midsummer* scene, I had enough adults to act as directors for each group and answer any questions that the kids had. The result was a wide variety of styles and senses of humor, accents ranging from British to country hick to a nasal "evil villain" type of voice. I wish I had had more time to work on different scenes with these classes because I think the experience would have been wonderful for all of us. I definitely look forward to more of this hands-on acting work with children in the future.

The worksheet that I gave the kids for the second week was more difficult than that of the first because it involved more critical thinking. I had a series of Shakespearean quotes that we had touched on in class that had to be matched to a contemporary way of saying each idea. If the students paid attention in class, the ditto should be fairly simple. Also included were some questions about my program -- what were their favorite parts, did they understand much, and would they like to see or read a Shakespeare play in the future.



## Conclusions

I thought my program was fairly successful overall. The students seemed interested throughout, and were very enthusiastic about several of the activities. As I have said before, the fifth-graders understood much more than the fourth-graders, but both groups put forth their best efforts. The first session made the kids sit still a little too long, but we needed that much time to work with understanding the somewhat difficult language and to introduce the students to some of the new vocabulary. They were then rewarded with finger fencing, which helped balance the former inactivity. However, for the future, I would like to find a way to get students more involved with the "translation" of the speech. For example, smaller groups would force the children to speak up a little more than they would in a class of almost twenty. I would never want to put children on the spot in front of their classmates by forcing them to translate a phrase before they had much experience with the language.

I would also like to have more time to show them scenes from different plays by Shakespeare, to show them his incredible variety of styles and stories. The scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was one of the highlights for the students (both that scene and the finger fencing had the best response in my survey). Because Shakespeare was meant to be performed rather than read (many of his plays were not published until several years after his death), I feel that watching scenes acted out is the most important activity in this program. The *Henry V* prologue is a way to get the students involved in and used to the language so that they can better understand scenes in performance later on. In the same manner, hearing the language spoken during performance prepares the students for reciting lines when they eventually have the opportunity to act out scenes themselves.

I learned after I had done both sessions at the school that the Acting in Shakespeare class in UT's Theatre Department had developed a series of two-person

scenes as an exercise. Several of these scenes were inappropriate for this age-group (such as Othello questioning Desdemona's faithfulness), but perhaps some of the other scenes would have shown the students another aspect of Shakespeare's genius. Given much more time, I would also like to work more on the students themselves acting in Shakespeare's plays. With editing, almost any one of the comedies could be taken on as a class project. That way, the children could learn a little of what is involved in putting on a play. They could learn to identify with their characters, as well as learn the vocabulary for their own speeches (and probably, with a little help from me, tell the other students in modern language what their character is saying). Please understand that when I say "editing," I mean cutting a two-hour play down to approximately thirty minutes, basically keeping the important scenes and speeches and cutting out everything else so that the class would not feel overwhelmed.

One idea that I would like to put into practice is an Elizabethan environment for the scene that is presented in the class. I would explain to the kids that crowds were rowdy and talked back to the characters onstage -- I would also add that this practice is no longer accepted in theatres; they would get very bad reactions if they tried it in a modern theatre. They would be handed from one to three beans apiece, with which to pay for their admission. This would let them see the different placements of groundlings (who stood through the entire performance), the middle class (in seats on the first level of the theatre), and finally the aristocracy (who were seated on the second and third floors). The children could also be assigned to act like their "characters," which would bring an interesting social relevance to the program which is mirrored in Shakespeare's plays. I could ask the children who were groundlings how they felt about seeing the others sit while they had to stand, and the children who were standing how they felt about seeing the other people stand. I would remind them that they were placed at random in those positions, much like being randomly born into various parts of society, and ask them how

they felt about knowing that they easily could have been playing a different role. Going one step further, we could briefly discuss the fact that poorer people in Shakespeare's plays speak prose, while those of higher classes speak in poetry, implying that the common people are not as good as their richer counterparts. Basically, by including this kind of exercise, I could introduce history of Shakespeare's time and social issues that are still relevant.

I believe that the program I used worked well, even without the aforementioned additional activities. The children seemed to be interested in what I showed them (with the possible exception of two fourth-grade boys whose attentions wandered). In the fifth-grade class, I even had a child ask me where he could get a book like mine (a copy of the complete works of William Shakespeare). When I gave them the title (yes, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*), almost all of the children wrote it down, agreeing that they would like to have a copy. That moment was totally unexpected, but it "made" my month. The fifth-graders definitely understood much more than the fourth-graders. This difference leads me to think that a slightly different program might be necessary for the younger students, especially if I decided to incorporate third-graders as well. For that age-group, I would focus more on the performance aspect, showing them many more scenes from such comedies as *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Twelfth Night*, trying to initially reach the children through humor and physical comedy, and only later focusing as much on the language. The program that I used at New Hopewell might work well for middle-schoolers, also. Older students would require less work on the language, which would leave more time to expose them to different types of scenes. I think that work like this should be done before high school, though. In elementary and middle schools, children are more willing to get up and be part of scenes and crazy exercises. Also, by the time they are in high school, many students have made up their minds as to whether they would want to be a part of drama,

whether they enjoy English classes, and so on. I want to work with them while they are still blank slates, before they have made any of these decisions, so that when the time comes for them to choose, I might have made a difference, however small.

On the whole, therefore, I would like to continue working with the ten to twelve-year-olds. Despite the fourth-graders' problems, everyone in both classes seemed to enjoy the program. I feel that they will indeed look forward (some more than others) to their future experiences with Shakespeare.

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## Appendix

*A Midsummer Night's Dream***Act I Scene II**

- QUINCE: Is all our company here?
- BOTTOM: You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.
- QUINCE: Here is the scroll of every man's name which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and Duchess on his wedding day at night.
- BOTTOM: First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point.
- QUINCE: Marry, our play is "The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe."
- BOTTOM: A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.
- QUINCE: Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.
- BOTTOM: Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.
- QUINCE: You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.
- BOTTOM: What is Pyramus? A lover or a tyrant?
- QUINCE: A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.
- BOTTOM: That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. I will move storms; I will condole in some measure. To the rest - yet my chief humor is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.
- "The raging rocks  
And shivering shocks  
Shall break the locks  
Of prison gates;  
And Phibbus' car  
Shall shine from far  
And make and mar  
The foolish Fates."
- This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. [This is Ercles' vein. A lover is more condoling.]
- QUINCE: Francis Flute, the bellows mender.
- FLUTE: Here, Peter Quince.
- QUINCE: Flute, you must take Thisbe on you.
- FLUTE: What is Thisbe? A wandering knight?
- QUINCE: It is the lady that Pyramus must love.
- FLUTE: Nay, faith, let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming.

- QUINCE: That's all one. You shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.
- BOTTOM: An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: "Thisne, Thisne!" "Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear!"
- QUINCE: No, no, you must play Pyramus, and Flute, you Thisbe.
- BOTTOM: Well, proceed.
- [QUINCE: Robin Starveling, the tailor  
STARVELING: Here, Peter Quince.]
- QUINCE: Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.
- SNOUT: Here, Peter Quince.]
- QUINCE: [You, Pyramus' father; myself Thisbe's father;] Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part; [and I hope here is a play fitted.]
- SNUG: Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.
- QUINCE: You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.
- BOTTOM: Let me play the lion too. I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me. I will roar that I will make the Duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again."
- QUINCE: An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.
- [ALL: That would hang us, every mother's son.]
- BOTTOM: I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you [as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you] an 'twere any nightingale.
- QUINCE: You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man, a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day, a most lovely gentlemanlike man. Therefore you must needs play Pyramus.
- BOTTOM: Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?
- QUINCE: Why, what you will.
- BOTTOM: I will discharge it in your straw-color beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your [French-crown-color beard, your] perfect yellow.
- QUINCE: [Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced.] But, masters, here are your parts. And I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you to con them by tomorrow night, and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight. There will we rehearse; for, if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw up a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.
- BOTTOM: We will meet, and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains, be perfect. Adieu.
- [QUINCE: At the Duke's oak we meet.

**BOTTOM:** Enough. Hold, or cut bowstrings.]



*As You Like It***Act III Scene V**

lines 8 - 27

PHOEBE:

I would not be thy executioner;  
I fly thee, for I would not injure thee.  
Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye.  
'Tis pretty, sure, and very probable,  
That eyes, that are the frail'st and softest things,  
Should be called tyrants, butchers, murderers!  
Now I do frown on thee with all my heart,  
And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee.  
Now counterfeir to swoon; why, now fall down,  
Or if thou canst not, O, for shame, for shame,  
Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers!  
Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee.  
Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains  
Some scar of it; [lean upon a rush,  
The cicatrice and capable impressure  
Thy palm some moment keeps;] but now mine eyes,  
Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not,  
Nor, I am sure, there is no force in eyes  
That can do hurt.

## *The Life of King Henry the Fifth*

### **Prologue**

#### CHORUS:

O, for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven of invention!  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!  
Then should the warlike Harry, [like himself,]  
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,  
Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire  
Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,  
The flat unraised spirits that hath dared  
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth  
So great an object. Can this cockpit hold  
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the very casques  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?  
O, pardon! Since a crooked figure may  
Attest in little place a million;  
And let us, ciphers to this great account,  
On your imaginary forces work.  
Suppose within the girdle of these walls  
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,  
Whose high upreared [and abutting] fronts  
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder.  
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:  
Into a thousand parts divide one man  
[And make imaginary puissance.]  
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them  
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth.  
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,  
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,  
Turning the accomplishment of many years  
Into an hourglass - for the which supply,  
Admit me Chorus to this history,  
Who, Prologue-like, your humble patience pray  
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Henry the Fifth Crossword Puzzle

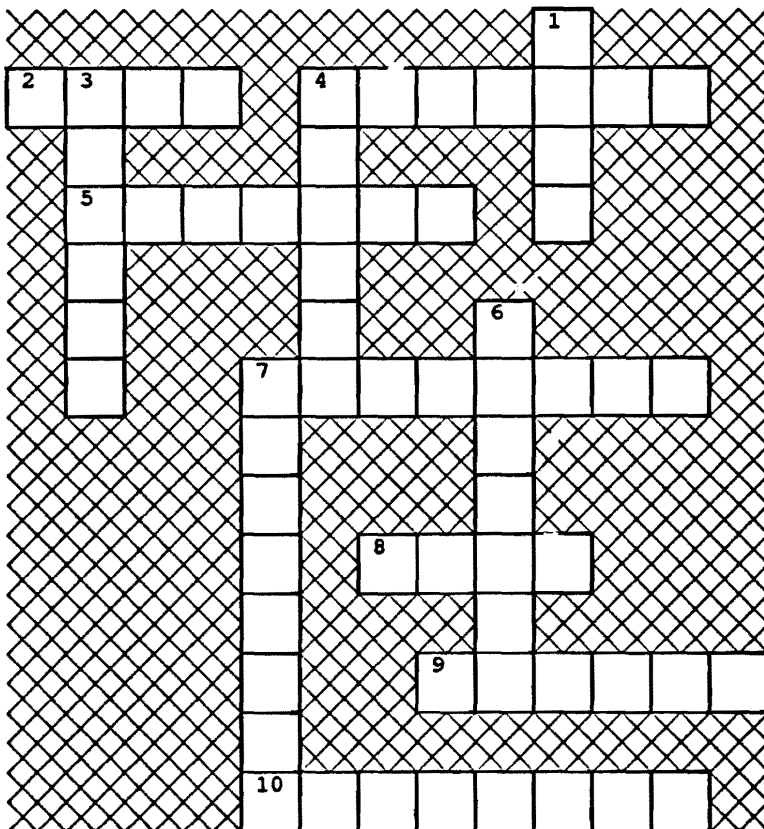
ascend  
casques  
Chorus  
cipher  
cockpit  
Mars  
monarch  
muse  
perilous  
port  
Prologue  
scaffold

### Across

2. Roman god of war, also a planet
4. Cannons
5. Place where chicken fight takes place, also part of an airplane
7. Speech before a play
8. Face, also where boats can dock
9. Narrator or storyteller, also part of a song
10. Stage

### Down

1. Source of inspiration
3. Go up
4. Zero, nothing
6. King or queen
7. Dangerous





Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Shakespeare Matching

- \_\_\_ 1. "What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun." (*Romeo and Juliet*)
- \_\_\_ 2. "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears." (*Julius Caesar*)
- \_\_\_ 3. "May we cram within this wooden O the very casques that did affright the air at Agincourt?" (*Henry the Fifth*)
- \_\_\_ 4. "'Tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings." (*Henry the Fifth*)
- \_\_\_ 5. "Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!" (*Macbeth*).
- \_\_\_ 6. "I will move storms." (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)
- \_\_\_ 7. "Most wonderful that she should so dote on Signor Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviors seemed ever to abhor." (*Much Ado About Nothing*)
- \_\_\_ 8. "Now counterfeit to swoon." (*As You Like It*)

- A. It's pretty weird that she likes him, because she always acts like she hates him.
- B. Could we show you on this little stage the cannons that fired in battle?
- C. Use your imagination to believe that the actor who is playing a king in our show is a real king.
- D. My life was dark and empty until she came.
- E. I will make them cry.
- F. Are you trying to pick a fight? Then give me your best shot.
- G. Pretend to faint.
- H. Hey guys - listen up!

What was your favorite part of the program? \_\_\_\_\_

A. *Henry the Fifth* speech    B. Finger Fencing    C. Video

D. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* scene    E. Witches' scene

Would you want to see or read a whole play by Shakespeare? Yes or No

Did you understand what was going on in the scenes we did? Yes or No

Name Lee Ann

## Shakespeare Matching

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Kinda

The Witches' Scene  
from  
*Macbeth*  
by William Shakespeare



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1st Witch: When shall we three meet again?  
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

2nd Witch: When the hurlyburly's done,  
When the battle's lost and won.

3rd Witch: That will be ere the set of sun.

1st Witch: Where's the place?

2nd Witch: Upon the heath.

3rd Witch: There to meet with Macbeth.

All three: Fair is foul, and foul is fair.  
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

