



2004

William's Window

Krista Beaman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Beaman, Krista (2004) "William's Window," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 25 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol25/iss1/10>

This Play Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Stockdale, Marina. *William's Window*. I.E. Clark, Inc., 1983. ISBN 0886802091. \$ contact publisher for price. 31 pp.

Reviewer: Krista Beaman

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Adventure Plays; Contemporary Realistic Plays; Fantasy Plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616--Adaptations--Juvenile drama; Witches--Juvenile Drama; Imagination--Juvenile Drama

Theme: Imagination and an introduction to Shakespearean plays.

Production Requirements: Costumes, even Elizabethan ones, can be simple because they are suggestive rather than historically accurate. A donkey's head can be a Halloween mask or a paper-mache creation, and the witches' cauldron for *Macbeth* can use dry ice as a neat effect, but isn't required. Music and Elizabethan dancing can be used if desired.

Estimated Runtime: 80-90 mins, but many scenes could, by written allowance in the script by the playwright, be deleted to shorten the production.

Characters: Up to 50, but can be done most easily by doubling with perhaps 15, about 7M and 8F (several parts are either gender)

Cast requirements: All parts can be done by children. If desired, adults and children may be mixed, so that the adults perform the Shakespearean scenes.

Period: Mostly Shakespearean, though set in modern-day

Taylor, Andy, Mollie and Elizabeth are playing in the backyard, but they start to argue. In an attempt to distract them, Sandy begins telling them about the Shakespearean plays that she has been reading. She helps them use their imagination to "see" scenes from Shakespeare's plays, such as *Macbeth*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry IV*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This is written specifically to introduce Shakespeare to young audiences. As such, it is immensely successful in the scene choices and character diversity which portray excitement, romance, mystery, darkness, humor, and life lessons. The audience is also encouraged to use their imaginations without being didactic. The children are well-characterized and distinct: Taylor is bossy, Andy is unimaginative, Sandy is the smart one and Mollie and Elizabeth are very romantic and excited about everything.

The main children characters fight among themselves and then make up. Their personalities are interesting as they react to each other while learning about the plays. The scenes from Shakespeare are well-known in the adult world and well-chosen for intrigue and interest to a child. The play doesn't drag. Actors are constantly coming off and on, creating an entirely new place on the stage every few minutes. Small stage skirmishes, bets, brewing cauldrons, etc. keep the interest of the audience well. The ending is the only disappointment concluding with the final scene of *Taming of the Shrew*, and at the last Shakespearean line, it's over. The audience receives no further information about any of the children through which we've been viewing these scenes, and it seems the story has been cut off. Overall, this is an outstanding play and worth the effort to produce.