

**A CONNECTICUT
YANKEE IN
KING ARTHUR'S
COURT**

ADAPTED BY

JEFFREY HATCHER

FROM THE NOVEL BY

MARK TWAIN



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT
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A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT was commissioned and first performed by the Acting Company (Margot Harley, Producer), New York, New York. It was directed by Ian Belknap, the set design was by Neil Patel, the costume design was by Candice Donnelly, the lighting design was by Michael Chybowski, and the sound design was by Fitz Patton. The cast was as follows:

HANK Andy Nogasky
LAINIE/SANDY Suzy Kohane
CHARLIE/CLARENCE Grant Fletcher Prewitt
DUFF/ARTHUR Adam Mondschein
CHET/LANCELOT Torsten Johnson
MR. OLZESKI/MERLIN Ian Gould
DOOBER/MORDRED Joshua David Robinson
CAROLINE/MORGAN LE FAY Susanna Stahlmann
JILL/GUINEVERE Angela Janas

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT was subsequently produced by the Acting Company in association with the Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director; Jennifer Bielstein, Managing Director), Minneapolis, Minnesota, with the same cast and creative team.

CHARACTERS

HANK MORGAN

LAINIE / SANDY

CHARLIE / CLARENCE

DUFF / KING ARTHUR

CHET / LANCELOT / WALTER

MR. OLZESKI / MERLIN

DOOBER / MORDRED

RANDY / SIR KAY

CAROLYN / MORGAN LE FAY

JILL / GUINEVERE / MOTHER CARTELOISE / PRINCESS
BEAUTEOUS

ASSORTED PEASANTS, PRISONERS, PETITIONERS,
GUARDS, DUNGEON MASTERS, MAIDENS,
AND MESSENGERS

PLACE

Hartford High School trophy hall
The England of King Arthur

TIME

The present and the 6th century

DOUBLING SCHEME

The play can be performed with as few actors as 10: 7 men, 3 women. In the Acting Company production, the roles were doubled as follows:

HANK MORGAN

CHARLIE, CLARENCE

DUFF, KING ARTHUR

CHET, CROWD 1, PRISONER 2, LANCELOT, WALTER,
GUARD 1

MR. OLZESKI, MERLIN, MESSENGER

DOOBER, CROWD 2, PRISONER 1, PETITIONER 1,
MORDRED

RANDY, SIR KAY, DUNGEON MASTER, GUARD 2

LAINIE, CROWD 3, SANDY

CAROLYN, PRISONER 2, MAIDEN, PETITIONER 2,
MORGAN LE FAY

JILL, CROWD 4, GUINEVERE, MOTHER CARTELOISE,
PRINCESS BEAUTEOUS

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Hartford High School trophy hall.

Lights rise on—

A 6th-century knight in full armor. It takes a moment to realize it's actually a suit of armor on a pedestal D.S. C.

U.S. C. against the trophy wall is a second suit of armor. Above it hangs a banner: "HARTFORD HIGH SCHOOL YANKEE KNIGHTS CLASS OF 2000 15TH REUNION"

Sound: the clang of broadswords.

KNIGHT VOICE 1. (*Offstage.*) Die! Die, Villain! Die!

KNIGHT VOICE 2. (*Offstage.*) Nay, Villain, thou diest!

Two knights in helmets enter, swinging broadswords at each other.

CLANG! CLANG-CLANG! CLANG!

KNIGHT 1/KNIGHT 2. There!—Nay!—No!—Ha!—Take that!—Ho!—Ha!

CAROLYN. (*From offstage.*) CHET!

Carolyn storms on.

CHET, THOU ART AN ASS! If anyone was going to make me regret organizing our high school reunion I didn't think it would be my own idiot husband.

Carolyn pulls the helmet off Chet's head. Duff takes off his helmet.

DUFF. Chet was just reliving his glory days as a Yankee Knight.

CHET. And what were you doing?

DUFF. I was going along with it because I look really good with a sword.

Carolyn takes their helmets and swords away.

Jill enters with a cocktail.

JILL. If one more person looks at me and says, "What's different about you?" I'm gonna shove a swizzle stick in their eye.

CAROLYN. Jill, what are you doing out here? You're supposed to be running the registration table.

JILL. Lainie and Charlie can handle it. Well, how hard can it be to give out name tags and seat assignments?

Charlie, a nervous type clutching a yearbook, enters.

CHARLIE. Carolyn, about the nametags and seat assignments...?

CAROLYN. It's very simple, Charlie, your seat number is your SAT score plus your ACT score divided by your GPA.

Lainie, a nice girl, enters. She is laden with nametags. Carolyn grabs the tags from her.

These are a mess, Lainie!

LAINIE. Fire me.

CAROLYN. No RSVP, no RSVP, no RSVP...

Doober, a greaser/stoner type in dark glasses, enters.

DUFF/CHET. DOOBER!

CHET. Doober, my manimal!

DUFF. Hey, Doob, did you, you know, *bring* any contraband?

Doober takes out a large baggie filled with an herb substance and dangles it in front of them.

DOOBER. Who wants to be Doober's friend?

DUFF/CHET. DOOBER!

Randy Russell, a mook, enters.

RANDY. Is Cawowyn hewwre?

DUFF/CHET/DOOBER. WANDY WUSSELL!

RANDY. It's not *Wandy!* It's *Wandy!* *Wandy with an AW!*

DUFF/CHET/DOOBER. (*Joining in.*) *Wandy with an Aw!*

DUFF/CHET/DOOBER/RANDY.

WE ARE THE YANKEE KNIGHTS
MIGHTY MIGHTY YANKEE KNIGHTS
EVERYWHERE WE GO-OH
PEOPLE WANNA KNOW-OH
WHO WE ARE
SO WE TELL THEM:

WE ARE THE YANKEE KNIGHTS
MIGHTY MIGHTY YANKEE KNIGHTS
ANYONE WHO WANNA FIGHT
ROCK 'EM SOCK 'EM OUTTA SIGHT

IF YOU KNOW US
YOU CAN BLOW US

Mr. Olzeski (70s) enters.

CHARLIE.

IF YOU KNOW US
YOU CAN BLOW US

CAROLYN. (*À la "Nix, nix, the cops."*) *Hi, Mr. Olzeski!*

OTHERS. (*Ad lib, overlap.*) *Huh?—Oh!—Erm, hi, Mr. Olzeski!—
Mr. O!—Mr. O'Z!*

MR. OLZESKI. *Charlie, what are you doing with that helmet?*

Mr. Olzeski takes the helmet.

This is the prize of the collection.

Mr. Olzeski places the helmet back. Takes out typed sheet.

Carolyn, when am I supposed to speak to the hoi polloi? I have prepared some opening remarks.

CAROLYN. *Yes, well, actually—*

MR. OLZESKI. (*Reads.*) *"Welcome, Class of the Year 2000, to your 15th-Year Reunion. For over a century Hartford High School has educated Hartford's young so that they could learn and grow and*

leave Hartford immediately. Tomorrow the wrecking ball comes down on our school, but the symbol of our Yankee pride, the 6th-century armor you all saw tonight will be given to the state..." And here is where I need to know, did Hank Morgan RSVP?

LAINIE. Hank Morgan? Hank's coming?

CAROLYN. I never heard back from him.

LAINIE. Did the invitation get sent to the right place?

CAROLYN. How should I know? The last address we had for him was the back of a Kia.

CHET. Remember the weird inventions Hank would make for Science Fair?

MR. OLZESKI. Every year Hank Morgan's invention would be the most original, the most useful, the most perfectly crafted, and every year first prize went to the Baking Soda Volcano.

CAROLYN. (*Checks her watch.*) Okay, people, we're two minutes off schedule! Let's start moving into the cafeteria. First drink's free!

Chet, Doober, Jill, and Charlie bolt for the cafeteria.

Chet, we agreed! No drugs and an eight-drink maximum!

Chet, Doober, Jill, Charlie, and Carolyn exit offstage.

RANDY. Why won't they pwnounce Wandy the wight way? Why? Why?

Randy and Mr. Olzeski exit offstage.

Duff starts for the cafeteria, but stops when he sees Lainie hesitate.

DUFF. Hey what's the matter? Aren't you going in?

LAINIE. In a minute.

DUFF. Hey, where's my Yankee Knight Homecoming Queen, Fairest Maiden of Them All, the old Lainie?

LAINIE. That's the *young* Lainie. *Old* Lainie is right here with anxiety and self-esteem issues.

DUFF. Look, I didn't come back here so I could hang out with *this* bunch of losers. I came to see *you*. Now that you're single. And *I'm* single. Again. I know I made a mistake dumping you the day I left for college, but most high school relationships break up by Thanksgiving

of freshman year. I was just trying to save time.

LAINIE. I guess the age of chivalry *isn't* dead.

DUFF. Come on, Lainie, I fixed it so we're sitting together.

LAINIE. But I was valedictorian. Your GPA wasn't *close* to mine.

DUFF. I said I *fixed* it.

Duff grins and takes Lainie offstage.

Sound: music, voices, laughter.

Hank Morgan (30s) enters, in a 1970s powder-blue tux jacket and a BOSS T-shirt with the logo on it. He looks around, uncomfortable. He glances offstage, smooths down his hair, adjusts his lapels. Then he notices the suit of armor.

Hank pokes a finger into what we now realize is a hole in the armor's breastplate. His finger gets stuck. He grabs the hand of the armor. It comes off. Hank struggles to deal with this as—

Lainie enters. She looks like she's trying to escape from the reunion, but she stops in her tracks when she sees Hank.

LAINIE. ...Hank?

HANK. Lainie.

LAINIE. What are you doing to that suit of armor?

HANK. I got stuck in it.

LAINIE. Do you want to leave it there?

HANK. No.

Lainie frees Hank's finger and reattaches the metal hand.

LAINIE. There.

HANK. My thanks.

LAINIE. My pleasure.

Beat.

HANK. So, uhm...how are you?

LAINIE. I'm fifteen years older, divorced, two kids, messed up.

HANK. Well, you *look* great.

LAINIE. You?

HANK. I think I look *okay*. Except for this jacket. The invitation

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher
from the novel by Mark Twain

7M, 3W (doubling)

Lancelot, Guinevere, and Merlin come tumbling your way in this contemporary adaptation of the satirical tale from America's favorite humorist. Wander with Twain as he time travels to 6th-century England through the eyes of Hank Morgan of Hartford, Connecticut, who is unexpectedly transported back to the time of legendary King Arthur. Hank astonishes the Middle Age with modern technology and pop culture. These tricks from the future initially advance and improve King Arthur's Court, but society ultimately struggles to evolve 1,300 years into the future. Jeffrey Hatcher's adaptation of Twain's romp exposes the foibles and fortes of both ages, leading audiences to question and laugh at themselves and the principles of the 21st century.

"Playwright Jeffrey Hatcher can hardly open his mouth or lift his pen without dropping a dry witticism or an erudite bon mot."

—TheTangential.com

"Plenty of laughs and a goodly amount of fun..." —TwinCities.com

"Light and smart... [with a] compelling protagonist [who is] out of touch with people and out of his own time, both of which are mined for a great deal of comedy."

—TwinCitiesDailyPlanet.net

Also by Jeffrey Hatcher

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

MRS. MANNERLY

SMASH

and others

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