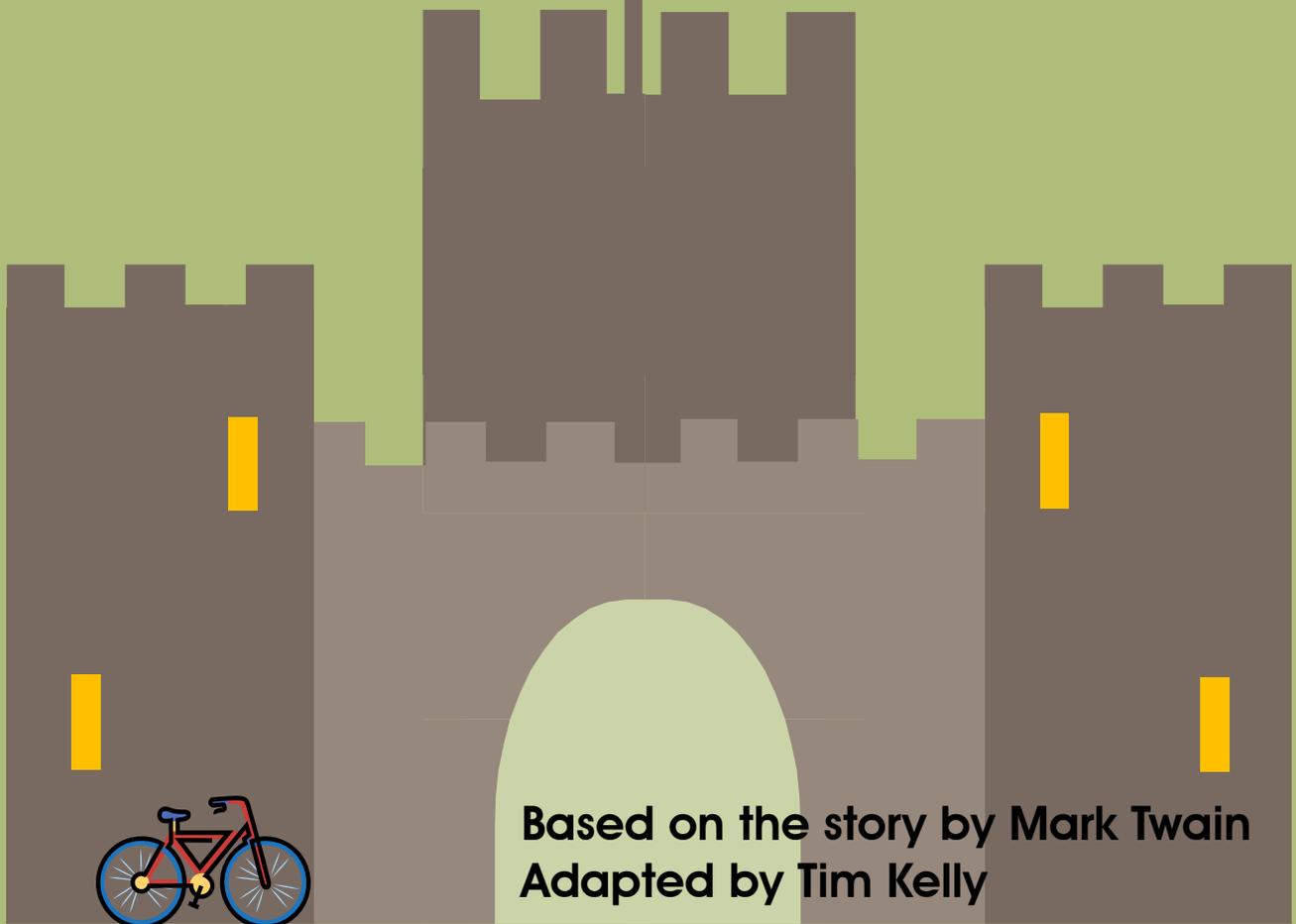


APPLAUSE! CARY YOUTH THEATRE PRESENTS

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court



Based on the story by Mark Twain
Adapted by Tim Kelly

**Learn more about Applause!'s upcoming production.
Hope to see you at the show!**

PAGE TO STAGE

The famous American author Mark Twain wrote the novel A Yankee in King Arthur's Court in 1889. Mark Twain was the pen name of Samuel Clemens, who wrote several novels, including The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. In the 1980's, a playwright named Tim Kelly adapted the novel into a play. That version of the script is the same one we are using for our play!

WHO and WHAT is the play about?

The WHO of the play are called CHARACTERS. WHAT they are doing is called the PLOT or ACTION.

While working on his school play, "Knights of the Round Table", Hank gets knocked out and wakes up in Camelot, in the days of King Arthur! Hank escapes capture by correctly predicting a solar eclipse. He is hailed a great wizard and even knighted by the King. As "Sir Boss", Hank gets to work modernizing Camelot, complete with telephones, bicycles and t-shirts. But the King's wicked half-sister Morgan Le Fey plots against the kingdom, planning an invasion with her own army! Hank helps King Arthur overcome Morgan's evil plot, and eventually makes it back home. But was it only a dream?

WHEN and WHERE does the story happen?

The WHEN and the WHERE of a play are called the SETTING.

Hank lives in Hartford, Connecticut, in present-times, where he does familiar things like watch TV, go to school, and chew gum. Camelot is a castle and court associated with the legendary King Arthur, from a time period thousands of years ago, in the 6th century. Stories of Camelot locate it somewhere in Great Britain, but it was most likely just a story, and not a real place. Life in Camelot would have been very, very different from yours. Knights and noble ladies attended the King's court, dragons were fought, and magic was in the air.

ACTIVITY: Time Capsule

Mark Twain lived from 1835-1910, when great changes were happening in America: settlers were spreading west, industry and technology were growing, slavery ended! By examining Twain's writings, we can learn about that time period and its people.

Write or tell a short story about someone – you? – from your lifetime who travels far into the future or the past. What will your story teach about the time in which you live? Remember to create CHARACTERS, PLOT/ACTION, and SETTING. Be creative!

CAMELOT CHARACTERS



King Arthur

Half-brother of Morgan Le Fey.
Took the sword from the stone; became King of Camelot.
Kind, brave, polite, tolerant, excellent fighter, good leader.

Morgan Le Fey

Half-sister of Arthur.
Plotted to take over Arthur's throne.
Scheming, evil, devious, sorceress.



Merlin

Adviser to King Arthur.
Predicted downfall of Camelot.
Mysterious, wise, sorcerer, able to cast spells,
and shape-change.

Queen Guenevere

Wife of King Arthur.
In some stories, was in love with Sir Lancelot.
Charming, beautiful, clever, sometimes moody.



ACTIVITY: Designer's Eye

There are many different stories, images and descriptions of what King Arthur, and other residents of Camelot may have looked like. Draw a picture of a costume you might create for your favorite Camelot character!

SOLAR ECLIPSE

Many writers use eclipses as a way to trick or deceive their characters. In ...*Connecticut Yankee*..., Hank uses his prior knowledge of an eclipse that, according to the story, happened on June 21, 528 CE, as a way to escape his capture. The scientific fact is, there was no solar eclipse at all visible in England in 528 CE. But, it makes for an interesting story! Find a friend and read these lines from the play:

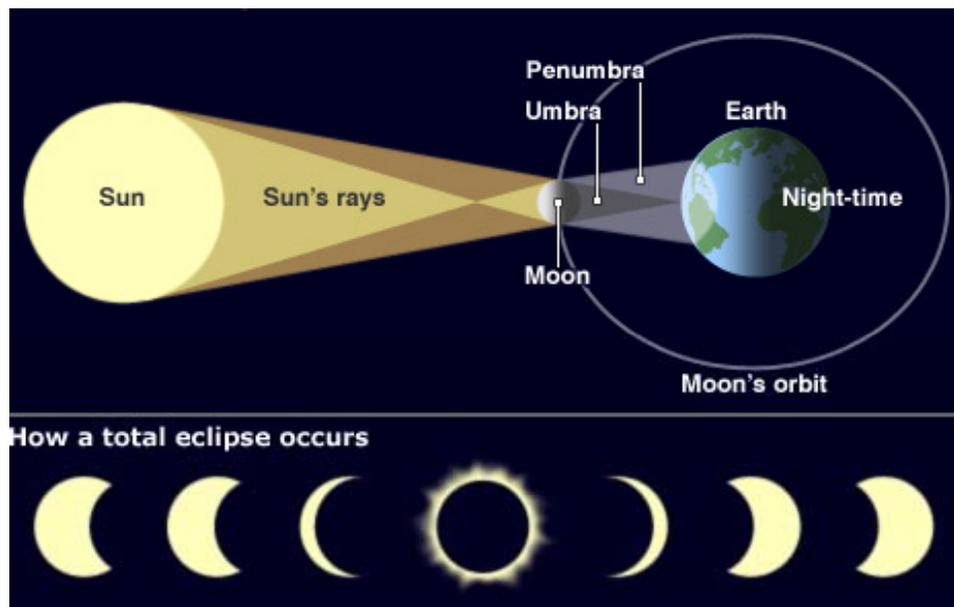
HANK: I will show you I am the greatest wizard Camelot has ever seen! I will blot out the sun and smother the whole world in darkness. WATCH! (Hank swallows hard, looks skyward.) Eclipse, don't fail me now. It's only a few seconds till noon.

LADY KAY: There's a great black shadow swallowing the sun!

HANK: (Relieved.) I told you I'd do it!

What is a SOLAR ECLIPSE?

Sometimes during their orbits, the Moon and the Earth form a line with the Sun. When this happens, an ECLIPSE occurs. There are two kinds of eclipse: lunar and solar.



In the play, Hank predicts a **total** solar eclipse. This is when the Moon moves between the Earth and the Sun, blocking the Sun's light. The darker part of the shadow is called the UMBRA. In the umbra part of the shadow, the sky slowly gets dark as the Moon moves in front of the Sun in a perfect line. Total solar eclipses are very rare.

The lighter part of the shadow is called the PENUMBRA. If you were standing on Earth in the penumbra part of the shadow, you would see only a little bit of the Sun's light blocked. This is called a **partial** solar eclipse and is much more common.

Activity: Kitchen Eclipse

MATERIALS NEEDED:

toothpick
play-doh
ruler
grape (Moon)
orange (Earth)
flashlight (Sun)

- STEP 1: Stick the toothpick into a little mound of play-doh. Place the grape (Moon) on top of the toothpick, about 2 inches high.
- STEP 2: Place the orange (Earth) about 3 inches behind the grape on a table.
- STEP 3: Shine the flashlight (Sun) directly at the Moon and Earth from about 1 foot away.

Look at the “Earth”. Do you see a shadow with an UMBRA and PENUMBRA? You just created a solar eclipse in your very own kitchen!

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***A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* features actors ages 7-12 years old, and is appropriate for all audiences.**

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Search “Applause” at www.townofcary.org or call (919) 465-4792.