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The Boy and the Globe

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This timely addition to Barrington Stoke's **Conkers** series has been published to mark the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death and will offer young readers a lively and accessible insight into the writing and theatrical production of Shakespeare's plays. The book is presented as a play with a cast list, a setting, London, a time, the years 1611 and 1623, and a story divided into acts and scenes.

The story begins as young orphan Toby Cuffe, trying to make a living on the streets of Jacobean Cheapside, throws himself on the mercy of Moll Cut-Purse, Queen of the Pick-Pockets, and becomes one of her thieves. Toby loves to read so when Moll sends him to the Globe Theatre to work he becomes so distracted by the action on stage that he is caught and taken before Will Shakespeare himself. Toby is then recruited as a spy for Shakespeare and his theatre company in their rivalry with the Rose Theatre. Toby's enthusiasm and love of the whole theatrical world helps Shakespeare to recover from writer's block and even gives him the inspiration for his play **The Tempest**. The Globe's success is assured, Toby becomes an actor with The Kings' Men and the epilogue of the story, set in 1623, sees Toby presented with a copy of the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays, produced after the playwright's death.

This short, beautifully-produced book is aimed at 7-10 year olds and has Barrington Stoke's 'super-readable' layout and typeface. Tony Bradman, self-styled 'Master Scribbler', has succeeded in conveying a great deal of history and background in a brief text with a light touch and a feel for the power of reading, writing and drama. The illustrator Tom Morgan-Jones with his 'inky daubs', cartoon-style drawings and brilliant endpapers contributes greatly to the vibrant atmosphere of the story. The book concludes with a second act of 'Funne Activities for Boyes and Girls', a section of puzzles, quizzes and fun facts that should widen the appeal of the book to young readers, particularly with the double page of Shakespearean insults. This lively book should give its readers some understanding of why Shakespeare's work has had such long lasting appeal.

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