Trouble Across the Pond

-Or-

A Tempest and a Teapot

By Will Jefferies

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information. The author's name must appear on all programs and advertising with the notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Company."

PUBLISHED BY
ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
histage.com
© 2008 Will Jefferies

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/trouble-across-the-pond

STORY OF THE PLAY

When an English Vicar returns home to Portsmouth, England from doing missionary work in California, he unknowingly brings back a bible containing a hidden map to a thriving gold mine. The Vicar is followed by the villainous Bartholomew Lovelace and his accomplices who are trying to find the map. Meanwhile, another villain native to Portsmouth, Agamore Primrose, has been courting one of the Vicar's three daughters in hopes of gaining a small but handsome inheritance should the Vicar succumb to an untimely accident.

During their adventures, the two villains meet and must compete in a battle of wits and dastardly deeds in order to become the rightful villain of Portsmouth. Bartholomew wins the contest and attempts to purloin the map from the Vicar by deception and theft. Agamore is cast out of the village and while suffering from amnesia is rescued by a humble monk who tries to lead him to a life of righteousness.

Not able to find the map on his own, Bartholomew takes the three daughters of the Vicar and holds them for ransom. Luckily, the two handsome heroes have overcome the traps of Bartholomew and rescue the women after a slow-motion brawl. Bartholomew and his gang are deported, the map in the bible is found and the heroes go on to court the Vicar's daughters and live happily ever!

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Originally produced (31 shows) at Mack's Inn Dinner Theater, Mack's Inn, Idaho with the following cast:

Maid Martha Childerhouse ..... Barbara Watt
Thomas Goodfellow ..... Grant Todd;
Patience Forthright ..... Audrey Fairbanks
Hope Forthright ..... Hailey Holtzclaw
Charity Forthright ..... Eve Eddington
Joseph Armstrong ..... Chad Busath
Agamore Primrose ..... Jon Fifield
Vicar Forthright ..... Matt Barrington
Bartholomew Lovelace ..... George Anderson
Carmen Villanueva ..... Holly Anderson
Dudley Burrows ..... Clayton Cammack
Sherry Rosebottom ..... Dani Sims
Philpot O'Callahan ..... Michael Fifield
Obey Juan Benedictus ..... Elliott Gee
Sergeant Louseout ..... Michael Fifield
Accompanist ..... Whitney Broderick

CHARACTER LIST *(In order of appearance)*

(8 or 9 m, 6 w. Townsfolk are optional. An accompanist, who may or may not be visible, is spoken to in Act I, Scene 5.)

MAID MARTHA: An older lady, proper and pure. Very friendly and speaks in a slight cockney accent as if from a humble background but with some refinement. She has some spunk left in her though.

THOMAS GOODFELLOW: A handsome and strong young man. Honest in all of his actions. He is beloved by the village and the Vicar. He is courting Patience, the Vicar's daughter.

PATIENCE FORTHRIGHT: The eldest of the Vicar's daughters. Beauty and virtue guides her every move. She believes in the goodness of all mankind and is the example to her younger kindred.

HOPE FORTHRIGHT: The middle daughter of the Vicar. She dreams of riding off into the sunset with Prince Charming. Filled with romance, she wants to follow her eldest sister's footsteps and court a handsome gentleman.

CHARITY FORTHRIGHT: The youngest daughter of the Vicar. Her naiveté bubbles through her warm personality. She's a bit of a risk taker and approaches life with the exuberance of youth.

JOSEPH ARMSTRONG: A handsome but humble farmhand. He is shy around the fairer sex, but will stand up to injustice when necessary.

VICAR FORTHRIGHT: The Vicar is a father figure who commands the respect of all around him. He is straightforward but friendly as long as you play by his rules.

AGAMORE PRIMROSE: A handsome yet cunning villain. The Englishman is well educated and uses his quick thinking to take advantage of others. He wants to inherit the property and power of the Vicar by any means necessary. He wears a black top hat, cape and enjoys a cane from time to time.

BARTHOLOMEW LOVELACE AKA "BART": Other than his thick black moustache, looks are not important to this American villain. Evil courses through his veins; he will stoop to any level to satisfy his insatiable greed. He wears a black Western hat and cape.

CARMEN VILLANUEVA: Bartholomew's fiery she-devil assistant. She speaks like a Spaniard but she comes from the rough and tumble Mexican border. There isn't a man alive she cannot seduce with her looks and slithering touch.

DUDLEY BURROWS: Bartholomew's dimwitted enforcer. Friendly until told to be otherwise. We're not sure what he is ever thinking about and neither is he. He speaks in a heavy Western drawl.

SHERRY ROSEBOTTOM: Sherry is the town's tavern wench with a chip on her shoulder. She speaks with a thick cockney accent and generally looks disheveled.

PHILPOT O'CALLAHAN: The town drunk. He is Irish and speaks in a heavy Irish accent. His only goal in life is pursuing the taste of ale and will do anything for it. He lives life in a drunken blur.

OBEY JUAN BENEDICTUS AKA "BEN": This wise and humble monk lives to serve mankind. His mental state is suspect at times as he has been in the monastery for far too long.

SERGEANT LOUSEOUT: An English Bobby who strictly enforces the law. Role may be doubled by the actor playing Philpot.

Production Notes

This play is intended to be a traditional melodrama set near the time of the California gold rush. Liberties have been taken by the playwright as to the size of Portsmouth, as it was a bustling shipping port by the 1800s. Every effort was taken to make the original production reflect the time period, however, some modern materials and objects were used sparingly.

The original set consisted of three building facades: one of a tavern/café stage right, one of a church upstage center, and one of a small house stage left. The tavern scenes were played outside as if it were more of a café than tavern, with three small tables that were stacked against the tavern facade until "open." A small thrust area down left of the house façade was used for the monastery scenes. Any other locations were indicated with roll drops and/or directed light. All of the scenes were underscored with music.

The wreckage piece that Joseph and Thomas cling to while standing onstage was made of planks of wood screwed together forming an approximate 3x3 square. The downstage edges of the square had strips of blue material hanging down to the floor to indicate the water and conceal an actress. Before the scenes began, the actress playing Sherry (concealed in a dark cloak) would hand out two spray bottles to the audience during the blackout. She then hid under the plank. She also operated the shark fin that Joseph and Thomas see swim by. After the scenes she would gather up the squirt bottles and exit. If audience members cannot squirt the actors due to theatre seating, other performers or staff could just squirt the actors while cloaked. Once again, feel free to adjust the set requirements to your facility.

ACT I
Scene 1: The Arrival of the Vicar

(AT RISE: Maid MARTHA, an older lady, comes out of the church house. She is dressed conservatively and in the manner of a maid. She speaks in a slight cockney accent. It is morning and she has just begun her daily chores.)

MARTHA: *(Said while sweeping.)* Ah, what another glorious morning in Portsmouth. The air is crisp, the birds are chirping, and everything is just buzzing. 'Twould be a marvelous day for a picnic or a stroll along the docks, but alas, the good master is returning today from America and all must be in order! So work, work, work, is the word of the day. *(THOMAS enters from the church. MARTHA spies him.)* Good morning, Thomas!

THOMAS: Good morning, Martha! A beautiful morning now, isn't it?

MARTHA: Yes indeed, sir! A grand day for a grand homecoming! Everything must be in order for the good master's return. A clean house, a hot meal, and a splendid party will be awaiting him … maybe a wedding announcement too perhaps?

THOMAS: *(Blushing.)* Perhaps…but I am not sure the Vicar approves of me courting his daughter. I feel as though I am unworthy for such a prize as Patience. Her beauty and charms are beyond all description.

MARTHA: *(Aside.)* I wish I were a few decades younger, he'd be after my charms I bet! *(Normal.)* You are a splendid young man: handsome, honest, and a follower of the good book. I've known the Vicar for many years and I can tell you with confidence that you are a splendid candidate for his first son-in-law.

THOMAS: *(Aside.)* I hope she does not toy with my anticipation, for though I am a strong and mighty man, I am yet tender. *(Normal.)* Thank you for your kind words, they bring me such courage!

MARTHA: *(Pulling HIM closer.)* Just be sure to talk to the good Vicar when he arrives … in private. You will know what is truly in his heart then. *(A bell tolls in the distance.)* Hark! I believe I hear the bell from the harbor announcing the arrival of a ship! The time is nearing when the good Vicar will be here. I must go and make myself presentable for his arrival. Patience! Hope! Charity!

(DAUGHTERS enter from various places around the house and carry some small object that would indicate they were doing their chores: a pail, washcloth, etc. As each one enters, she poses.)

PATIENCE: Coming, Martha!
THOMAS: *(Aside.)* Ah, there is beauteous Patience! My heart flutters at the thought of her as my bride!
HOPE: You called for me?
CHARITY: I am here, dear Martha!
MARTHA: The bell has tolled earlier than expected! The good Vicar will be here any moment. We must hastily finish tiding up!
DAUGHTERS: Yes, Martha.

(The DAUGHTERS assist MARTHA cleaning. PATIENCE goes to dump the pail, but THOMAS, being the gentleman he is, goes to her to get the pail.)

THOMAS: Let me take that for you, Miss Forthright. You look especially radiant this fine morning.
PATIENCE: Thank you, Mr. Goodfellow. As you know, my father returns today.
THOMAS: I await his arrival eagerly.
PATIENCE: I don't suppose you have anything to say to him?
THOMAS: I will report to him that his parish is in order, and that I was grateful to have served, in his behalf, the people of Portsmouth.
PATIENCE: In your conversation, will you be mentioning anything about *your* future?

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/trouble-across-the-pond

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!