

Playstage
Junior

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CONQUER AND DIVIDE!



A humorous play about the invasions of Britain
and the “greatness” of Alfred



Written by
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CONQUER AND DIVIDE

Cast in order of appearance

LOCAL KINGS (x2)
PEASANTS (x 3)
SAXON KINGS (x7)
NARRATOR 1 (BRIDGET - female)
NARRATOR 2 (AUDREY – female)
THANES (x 7)
CHURLS (x 7)
SLAVES (x 7)
KING ALFRED
REPORTER
FORESTER'S WIFE
MARKET TRADER
GIRL
BISHOP ASSER
ST BEDE
GUTHRUM

Possible 43 parts, of which at least 22 are solo speaking parts and the rest are chorus speaking parts. (The total number of parts could be LESS – for example, you could cut down on the number of Thanes, Churls and Slaves and you could cut out the Market Trader and Girl scene and lose about 15 people, if required. If MORE parts were required, then the Narrator's parts could be split up between more people and you could actually add some non-speaking Vikings to the end section.)

Approximate running time 30 minutes.

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

MUSIC

The Dam Busters

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=the+dambusters+march+

SONG 1

All Things Bright and Beautiful

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d67oF9X6lVw>

SOUND FX of canned applause

<https://freesound.org/search/?q=Applause>

SONG 2

We Shall Overcome

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=we+shall+overcome+song+for+kids

CONQUER AND DIVIDE

SONG 1 – The Dam Busters is played as long or as short as you require. Can be played whilst audience are taking their seats. As music is playing, a group of children improvise being in a boat, (SEE PRODUCTION NOTES) paddling in unison across the stage whilst SONG is being played. They are wearing Roman helmets. The NARRATORS, are standing at the back of the stage, wave to the passing boat. MUSIC fades, BOAT waits centre stage.

NARRATOR 1

The last of the Roman soldiers sailed away from Britain in AD 407, leaving the people of Britain ruled by local kings.

(The BOAT exits and all the NARRATORS wave some more and call out “Bye”, “Missing you already!” and other phrases. Enter KINGS and PEASANTS. LOCAL KINGS step forward and embark on a (controlled) fight with swords (this needs to be choreographed so it remains safe. SEE PRODUCTION NOTES) The KINGS then freeze as the NARRATOR speaks.)

NARRATOR 2

These kings ruled badly. (*KINGS unfreeze, fold their arms and look sulky*). They were not well trained or equipped (*KINGS look at their inadequate weapons*) and there was a lot of confusion over who the people were supposed to be supporting

KING 1 (*moving to one side of the stage, hands on hips. Proudly, with confidence*)
I am the king!

(PEASANTS run towards KING 1)

KING 2 (*moving to stand on the opposite side of the stage*)

No! I am the king!

(*PEASANTS turn and run towards KING 2. They then stand, centre stage and scratch their heads, looking confused, looking at one KING then the other.*)

NARRATOR 1

This confusion over who was in charge helped weaken Britain and this made it easier for neighbouring tribes to invade.

NARRATOR 2

Cue the Anglo Saxons!

(*ENTER ANGLO SAXON with long, blond plaits which s/he flicks away in a dramatic fashion and carrying an axe (SEE PRODUCTION NOTES) More SAXONS enter.*)

NARRATOR 1

The Anglo Saxons came from North Europe, Germany, Denmark and the Nether-regions.

SAXON 1 (*hissing to NARRATOR 1*)

What? Netherlands! Not regions!

NARRATOR 1 (*coughing in embarrassment*)

Sorry, Netherlands.

NARRATOR 2

They pushed out the native Britons into Wales, Scotland and Cornwall. Then, the Anglo Saxons took over the rest of the country, divided it up into seven regions, and settled down.

(During the previous speech, SAXONS move PEASANTS off stage. This could be a slow and controlled mime of swords and pushing and final brushing off of hands as if the job has been done. SAXON KINGS enter and the ordinary ANGLO SAXONS leave.)

NARRATOR 1

These regions were ruled by seven kings.

(SAXON KINGS embark on a controlled, mimed slow-motion fight.)

NARRATOR 2

... after lots of fighting

NARRATOR 1

More fighting?

SAXON KING 1 *(breaking off from his sword fight)*

Of course! How else do you think we claim our kingdoms?

NARRATOR 1 *(shaking head)*

Some people never learn!

(SAXON KINGS carry on fighting)

NARRATOR 2

I wonder if there would have been all this fighting if there had been seven Saxon Queens?

NARRATOR 1

We'll have to wait a long time for a woman to be in power!

NARRATOR 2

And have equal rights.

NARRATOR 1

But that's another play for another day.

NARRATOR 2

Well, I *can* do something while I'm waiting a few hundred years to become emancipated. (*to KINGS*) You lot, line up!

(SAXON KINGS stop fighting and line up)

NARRATOR 1 (*fetching a clip board with a register on it, as if at school*)

So, here we have the kings; Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Wessex, Essex, Sussex and Kent.

(As the NARRATOR reads each kingdom's name, the corresponding KING steps forward and says, "Here Miss!" before stepping back into line.)

NARRATOR 1

All present. They each run their own bit of England.

NARRATOR 2

These are the big guys.

(SAXON KINGS look at NARRATOR nod, looking “tough”, flexing their muscles.)

NARRATOR 1

Next in rank, come the thanes.

(THANES enter looking proud and superior. They line up behind the KINGS)

NARRATOR 2

These are the nobles who helped the kings rule.

(KINGS and THANES shake hands)

NARRATOR 1

Next, we have the Churls.

(CHURLS (The ordinary ANGLO SAXONS who came on first) enter and stand behind THANES)

NARRATOR 2

These are the ordinary folk. They’re free but they have to fight for the Thanes.

(CHURLS looking pleased with themselves on the mention of “free” then groan and look miserable at the mention of “fighting”).

NARRATOR 1 *(rolling eyes)*

More fighting ...

NARRATOR 2

More fighting. And lastly, we have the slaves. They're not free and have to do what they're told.

(Enter SLAVES, looking down trodden. Stand behind CHURLS. CHURLS give them a shove or a poke, just because they can.)

NARRATOR 1

Anything else to note, Audrey? *(aside)* Audrey, by the way, is a genuine Saxon name.

NARRATOR 2 (AUDREY)

Well, Bridget... *(aside)* Bridget is another genuine Saxon name... this King *(she points)* King Offa of Mercia *(MERCLA steps forward, hands on hips looking pleased with himself)* built a huge wall along the border of Wales keeping out those pesky Celtic tribes. You remember – those original ancient Britons, who were forced out. Offa also made the first English coins.

Then there was king Alfred ...

(SOUND FX of applause as KING ALFRED comes on stage and shows off a little. He flicks his long, blond plaits off over his shoulders and stands, very proud with his hands on his hips.)

NARRATOR 1

Not yet, love. We're not ready for you.

(KING ALFRED looks disgruntled and goes offstage again, grumbling under his breath.)

NARRATOR 2

I bet those coins that Offa invented are worth a bit now?

NARRATOR 1

Everything and *everyone* had their value in Saxon society. This was called weregild.

NARRATOR 2

For example, if a person was killed, the correct money had to be paid to their family, according to the law.

NARRATOR 1

Kind of like life insurance then?

End of sample/