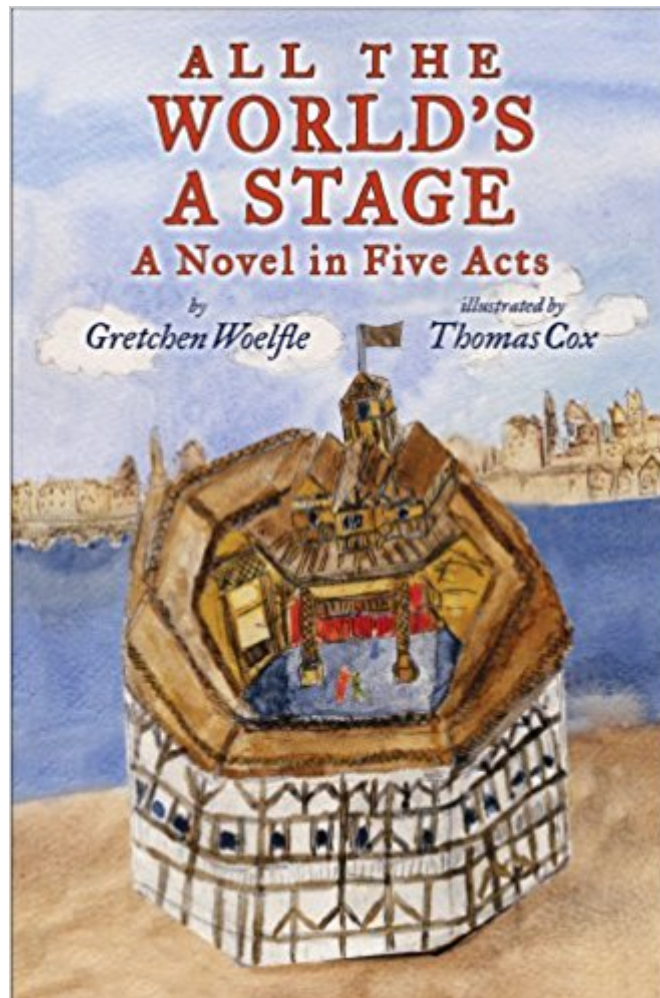




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All The World's A Stage: A Novel In Five Acts



Synopsis

Based on fact, this coming-of-age story offers a vivid picture of life behind the curtain at Shakespeare's theater. Suddenly a hand gripped the back of his neck. "Cutpurse!" Kit is caught! Twelve-year-old orphan Kit Buckles, seeking his fortune in Elizabethan London, has bungled his first job as a pickpocket at the Theatre Playhouse where the Lord Chamberlain's Men are performing. To avoid jail, Kit agrees to work for the playhouse and soon grows fond of the life there: the dramas on- and offstage. Things get truly exciting when Kit joins the plot to steal the playhouse from the landlord who has evicted the company.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 680L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 163 pages

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

A novel of Elizabethan theater centers around an unsuccessful thief. Kit is caught up in the excitement of a performance by the Lord Chamberlain's men at the Theatre. Unfortunately, he is a penniless, runaway 12-year-old orphan forced to work as a cutpurse, stealing money from audience members. Distracted by the drama, he fails in his first attempt and agrees to work for the players to avoid prison. Reluctantly, he is caught up in their hectic world of rehearsal and performance. Woelfle opens a revealing window into 1590s London and its dynamic theater scene. There are intriguing snapshots of one William Shakespeare, who finds his inspiration from street songs and

conversations he overhears. Men and boys play the roles of women, sew costumes, rehearse speeches and sword fights and build sets. The scene stealer here is the intrigue behind the stealthy deconstruction of the Theatre and its rebuilding as the Globe due to a legal squabble with the landlord. Against this backdrop, Kit grapples with his own career choices, growing into the satisfying realization that carpentry is his calling. Young Molly, who sells apples in the theater, is a welcome friend and foil. Readers of Gary Blackwood's *The Shakespeare Stealer* (1998) will find this equally exciting. The conceit of organizing the story through acts and scenes in lieu of chapters sets the stage nicely for a dramatic tale. (author's note, glossary, bibliography; illustrations not seen)

(Historical fiction. 8-12) --Kirkus Reviews

In Elizabethan England, 12-year-old Kit is one of hundreds of boys from the countryside who arrive in London to seek a trade. Unfortunately, Kit's first apprenticeship is with a gang of thieves, who order him to steal purses from the crowd at the Theatre playhouse, where Shakespeare is the writer in residence. After Kit is caught, the Theatre's managers give him the option of working off his crime, and what begins as a punishment turns into a thrilling opportunity as Kit becomes an indispensable stagehand and falls in love with theatrical life. Woelfle adds additional tension with a story, based on true events, of the players' eviction from one site, and the secret, rushed dismantling of the timbers that eventually formed the Globe Theatre at a different location. But the most compelling drama is Kit's universal search for his calling and his shifting friendships, particularly with a girl so clever that even Shakespeare quotes her. An author's note, a glossary, and a bibliography add more curricular tie-ins, while frequent charming drawings enhance the sense of time and place. --Booklist

Gretchen Woelfle's book for young readers *Jeannette Rankin: Political Pioneer* received the 2008 *Once Upon a World Children's Book Award* from the Simon Wiesenthal Center. This is her first novel. She lives in Los Angeles, California. Thomas Cox is a contributor for Holiday House Inc. titles including *All The World's A Stage*.

"All the World's a Stage" is a wonderful introduction to the world of William Shakespeare. Written for young readers, it takes us back stage at the Globe Theater, showing us how Shakespeare's plays were put on in the original. Well researched, the novel portrays everyday life in Elizabethan England in authentic detail. Highly recommended.

The book is marketed as a children's novel, but it's an inspired page-turner for anyone who enjoys engaging works of historical fiction. The story is told from the perspective of an orphan named Kit, a

pickpocket in London looking for fortune and adventure, and who gets his adventure in ways he never imagined. One of the things I enjoyed most is the cinematic way Woelfle tells the story. In an author's note, she says much of her research was done while riding bicycles through London. Her method really pays off. The sights and sounds of Kit's world are rich and often visceral, from the gritty alleyways of London, to the characters he meets onstage and off. The book is expertly researched and contains a tremendous amount of information. It would be wonderful for the classroom, and I found myself chuckling at some of the things that confused Kit as much as they would have confused me. That said, it doesn't feel like a forced attempt to "teach" - we are experiencing the vast world of possibility right alongside Kit. When Kit lets his imagination take hold, things really get exciting. And don't be fooled, the twists and turns don't wind up where you think they might.

This is a must-buy book for everyone who truly cares about giving their children engagement with the very best of new contemporary writing. It is a big, hugely exciting historic adventure, pacily told like all good childrens stories are and yet still packed full of exquisite telling detail along the way. The central character is beautifully well drawn and as a reader, one cares so much about his journey, the dilemmas in his young life and how he manages to move forward from his awful beginnings. I am a writer of children's television drama and fiction books in Great Britain - All The World's A Stage is quite simply the best new children's book I've read for a good long while. Look! Just go out and buy it! It's a remarkable piece of work.

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