

Director's Concept
The Genesis of Hoggetowne by Scott West
Monica Cross

With input from Scott West, Miranda West, Alan Tyson, and Randall Dees

The Genesis of Hoggetowne imagines a dispute during the first year of Hoggetowne in which the villagers are trying to decide what sort of entertainment with which to honor the King and Queen. The first board is tournament, where various themes are proposed and eventually, they come to Robin Hood V. King Arthur. This moves into board two, which is a chess board, where the villages have all chosen one side or the other and are "becoming" characters from that side. The good guys and the bad guys from each side begin fighting internally which turns into a chaotic melee, which takes us to board three: good guys v. bad guys. Arthur and Robin Hood defeat the bad guys and agree to share the Hoggetowne performance alternating years.

The metatheatrical nature of dramatizing the selection the Hoggetowne theme opens up entertaining possibilities for performance that I want to explore throughout rehearsal and creates some complicated production challenges that my team is excited to tackle. By focusing on the villagers selecting a performance theme, this production will explore the both the everyday life of Hoggetowne and larger than life characters of myth and legend. We will do this through costume, set, fighting, and character work.

The white/black distinction of a traditional chess board become much more complicated in this script. Also, because of the evolution of this story, each character will need two, possibly three, costumes. The villagers, who become the characters whose stories they want to tell, will need their villager costume (which I will call their base costume from here on out), and will add costuming elements for whatever other characters they take on as the story progresses. This means that a person might be a baker in the village, who suggests the idea of little red riding hood, but later take the part of Guinevere. So, that actor would need a base costume for the baker, a hood to signify little red riding hood, and a crown with a long veil to signify Guinevere. This also makes the delineation of factions by color more difficult. Therefore, I propose that the villagers all wear earth tones (browns, tans, muted colors), with some flexibility for the signifying elements for the stories that don't make it past the first board. The final factions will be: Arthur good guys (blue and white), Arthur bad guys (gold and black), Robin Hood good guys (green and burnt orange), and Robin Hood bad guys (red and black).

For this set, I would like to forego the use of the castle and create instead a large banner that would be stretched upon a large frame. Prior to board one, it would have a large March Madness style bracket, and we would have felt banners for each of the ideas proposed and a character who would keep track of the fights on the banner. Between the first and second board, we would put up a "Robin Hood v King Arthur" banner and have a patch that can go over the banner between boards two and three which would change it to say "Robin Hood & King Arthur v the Bad Guys". Without the use of the castle in this show, we could minimize the construction demands on the cast, and add an interactive layer to the set dressing.

Fighting is another area where the intentional design can highlight the complexity of our story. In the first board, I would to focus on unarmed and improvised weapons for the majority of the fights. To use the little red riding hood baker again as an example: I would love to see her fight with a rolling pin. We would use our advanced fighters, who have take mass weapon and so forth to focus on

SAMPLE DIRECTOR'S CONCEPT WRITTEN BY MONICA CROSS (c)2021

adapting the styles something that would make sense for the villagers, and collaborate between the Production Manager and Fight Coordinator to create or acquire suitable weapons. Moving into boards two and three, we would have more sword fights. As the villagers take on the characters whose stories they are telling, the fights would reflect the skill of the knights and bandits and royalty and guards that they are evolving into.

The evolution of characters within this story is one of the key features of this show, and something that I want to explore on and off chess board through dedicated character work. Using the baker as my example again. I would want that character to have a walk, a posture, and mannerisms that are all specific to the baker, but when she becomes little red riding hood, I would want that character to skip onto the chess board with the care free movement of little red riding hood on her way to grandma's house. When she becomes Guinevere, I want her to stand taller and take on a more regal presence. So there would be moments throughout each board where villagers would drop in and out of their other characters. The street scenes could likewise build off of this framework. Villagers could ask passersby advice on how to best portray their characters. One example might be for the villager playing the sheriff to ask a patron which gesture is more menacing, and then act out several different poses, gestures, and glowering glances. Another might be to have two villagers argue over which one gets to be Friar Tuck, and ask a patron's opinion on which villager it should be.

The overall effect of this show will be to involve the audience, both at the boards and in the lanes, in as much of the character creation and story telling as possible. This script adds a new level of audience participation that creates immediate and playable options for the cast. My production team and I will focus on the layers of storytelling within this show, and highlight the joy and levity of this metatheatrical story.