

Skit Notes: The Ramparts

Rebecca Locklear

Summary: Several people come to a party to celebrate the completion of the Elizabethan defensive ramparts and bastions at Berwick-upon-Tweed, England in early 1587. But are the new defenses really complete? What happens when the Italian engineer arrives?

Grades: 7-12

| Cast of Characters | # of Lines |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| John, butler | 4 |
| Hostess, woman of the house | 14 |
| Frederika Sheldon, friend of Hostess | 8 |
| Sir Robert Lee, English architect | 24 |
| Giovanni Portinari, Italian engineer | 29 |

Setting: Early 1587 inside a house in Berwick-upon-Tweed, England.

Props: Tea and scones, home set-up, photos #1, 2, 3 (below) or others from the internet for projection.

Performance Time: 10 minutes

Background Information: In the 1500s, King Philip of Spain and Mary, Queen of Scots plotted against Queen Elizabeth I of England (reign 1558-1603). In response, Queen Elizabeth decided to replace the medieval walls at Berwick-upon-Tweed with earth ramparts and bastions in order to prepare for a Scottish invasion.

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WITH BACKGROUND PHOTOS AND DRAWINGS**

WHERE IS THIS SKIT USED?

- History classes as reader's theatre
- Drama classes or showcases
- Choral music with drama concerts
- Renaissance fairs



Yule Photo

The Ramparts

Chris Green

with staging cues and modifications by Rebecca Locklear

Scene 1 Outside

JOHN: Pray silence for the reading of the Mayor's letter of complaint to her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth I, by which is explained some part of why the ramparts, which you see before you, were built.

(reads Mayor's letter) When the notable abuses in the military government and by some of the principal officers shall be laid open and manifest, the discrete sort will think that we have been too unmindful of our duties to your Majesty, careless of our own estates, and too long silent. The revealing of a Spanish practice in Scotland and the fear of sudden invasion stirred up our spirits which have been dulled and almost dead with twenty years of continual calamities *(bows, exits)*

Scene 2 Inside the house

HOSTESS: *(entertaining SIR ROBERT, tea is set; FREDERIKA SHELDON enters)* Fredericka, darling! So glad you could come, and *(indicating audience with distaste)* with so many of your friends, too. *(SIR ROBERT stands)*

SHELDON: Hello, my dear. *(kisses cheek of HOSTESS)*

HOSTESS: We are still waiting for the artist, Señor Portinari. Something about his galleon being stuck in the wrong sort of wind. But I think you know Sir Robert Lee, her majesty's very own little architect. *(HOSTESS moves to a sofa, sits)*

SIR ROBERT: Miss Sheldon. *(bows)* What a pleasure. At your service.

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“Fabulous information. Loved the humor!” – John M., parent

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