

PRODUCTION NOTES

CASTING

The Return of Ben Morgenstern is one of our scripts with a customizable cast size. The drama requires a minimum of 5 male actors and 6 female, but for a bigger cast we can customize the script to accommodate any number of performers up to a maximum of 9 male actors and 16 female. See the product description and Character Lists for details, or send an email to kittywham@gmail.com with the specifications for your cast.

COSTUMING

(For all 25 possible characters)

The year is 1872, so all characters are in historical clothing, but various styles. The characters can be divided into those on the ship *The Arabian* and those in Charleston, but even within those two groups the styles of clothing will vary:

Onboard the ship, the men all wear practical clothes, trousers and loose long-sleeved shirts, in plain colors. If desired, shirt color can be used to distinguish between the officers (George and Joseph) and the other men onboard (Thomas, Frank, Owen, and Ben). Ben needs two outfits: an old shabby one, in which he first appears drenched in Scene Two, and a clean set of crewman's clothes for his remaining scenes.

The women onboard (Elizabeth and Rebecca) also dress simply and practically: neat, full-length dresses in subdued colors, with long sleeves, and Rebecca might wear an apron pinned over hers.

In Charleston, the men (Christopher, Michael, and Daniel) are young working men from lower- or middle-class families, so they dress neatly and respectably, but not richly: dark-colored trousers, long-sleeved collared shirts, and (optionally) coats since the scenes take place out of doors. Michael is a clerk at a law office, so he could be dressed more formally than the other two—he might wear a suit, vest, tie, and/or hat. Christopher's attire is the most specific, due to his work as a letter carrier—he wears a mailman's hat and buttoned jacket over the rest of his clothes.

For the women in the Charleston scenes, the clothing is more varied and displays social status, though all wear full-length dresses with long sleeves. In the lower and middle classes are Ruthie, Rachel, Hazel, Clara, and Lydia. Ruthie and Rachel are working girls, so their dresses are the plainest, and they would likely wear aprons. Hazel is in all black—a plain mourning dress and shawl. Clara's and Lydia's dresses can be more colorful, but still fairly simple and neat. In contrast, the other women are all high-society ladies with more fashionable clothing: this includes Helen, Beulah, Dora Belle, April Mae, Flossie Pearl, Lula Ann, Azalea, Violet, and Poppy. Their outfits are the showiest—dresses with frills and flounces, gloves, maybe hats, etc. Optionally, if the three S.R.O.M. ladies (Azalea, Violet, and Poppy) had coordinated outfits—all the same color or the same design in different colors—that could add to the comedy of their characters.

Summary: Men—4 sailors, 2 ship's officers, 2 young professionals, 1 mailman; Women—1 ship's captain, 3 working women, 2 tutors/teachers, 1 woman in mourning, 9 fashionable ladies

SET/ONSTAGE PROPS

Prologue: *The Arabian* ship's deck—at back of stage, a long wooden wall, only two or three feet tall (the railing of the ship's deck); optionally, also a mast, ropes, etc. to convey the feel of a ship

Scene One: *The Arabian* set, now also with a wooden bench at center stage and optionally barrels, gear, etc.

Scene Two: Street in Charleston—at back of stage, a useable door (to Miss Hazel's boarding house) with a Christmas wreath; a bench (or any kind of seat for two) near the door

Scene Three: *The Arabian* set

Scene Four: Charleston set

Scene Five: *The Arabian* set

Scene Six: Charleston set

PROPS CARRIED ONSTAGE

Prologue: Rain coats (Thomas, Elizabeth, George, & Frank)

Scene One: Gauze (Elizabeth); bottle of ointment, blanket (Rebecca); map (Joseph); tin cup with water (Frank)

Scene Two: Mailbag, letters (Christopher); basket and/or satchel (Ruthie & Rachel)

Scene Three: Large canvas, needles (George & Joseph); basket, coat, needle, thread (Elizabeth)

Scene Four: Mailbag, letter (Christopher); coin purse with coins (Hazel); fancy gloves (Lula Ann)

Scene Five: Logbook (Owen); coat, satchel (Ben); mailbag (Christopher); sack (Thomas)

Scene Six: Coat, satchel (Ben); mailbag (Christopher)

SPECIAL EFFECTS

The Prologue takes place in a storm with wind, thunder, and lightning.