

Back Yard Bard plays 2024 *All's Well the Ends Well* and *Julius Ceasar*

Back Yard Bard is GreenStage's one-hour cuttings of full plays with 4 actors performing all the roles and telling a complete story. 2 plays tour at the same time with the same 4 actors performing them. It has a minimum set or costumes. The characters are coming on one after another and are often changing costume pieces as they come on in character. It is fast paced, with lots of characters and text to keep in your head, and yes, we do both plays back-to-back on some Sunday afternoons.

All's Well that Ends Well: Synopsis from Folger Shakespeare Library:

In *All's Well That Ends Well*, a woman is given in marriage to the man she longs for, but, because she is of lower rank, he refuses to accept the marriage. It becomes her challenge to win his acceptance.

Helen, the daughter of a dead physician, secretly loves Bertram, the Count of Rosillion's son. When the count dies, Bertram becomes a ward of the French king, who is dying of a fistula. Helen heals the ailing king, and he grants her wish to marry his ward. Bertram refuses to consummate the marriage and goes off to war, sending Helen a list of seemingly impossible conditions to be met before he will consider her his wife.

To meet his conditions, Helen substitutes herself for a woman whom Bertram desires, and sleeps with him. When false news comes that Helen is dead, Bertram faces the charge that he has killed her. Helen, now pregnant, reappears, saving Bertram and demonstrating that she has met his conditions. Bertram then acknowledges her.

Julius Ceasar: Synopsis from Folger Shakespeare Library:

Caesar's assassination is just the halfway point of *Julius Caesar*. The first part of the play leads to his death; the second portrays the consequences. As the action begins, Rome prepares for Caesar's triumphal entrance. Brutus, Caesar's friend and ally, fears that Caesar will become king, destroying the republic. Cassius and others convince Brutus to join a conspiracy to kill Caesar.

On the day of the assassination, Caesar plans to stay home at the urging of his wife, Calphurnia. A conspirator, Decius Brutus, persuades him to go to the Senate with the other conspirators and his friend, Mark Antony. At the Senate, the conspirators stab Caesar to death. Antony uses a funeral oration to turn the citizens of Rome against them. Brutus and Cassius escape as Antony joins forces with Octavius Caesar.

Encamped with their armies, Brutus and Cassius quarrel, then agree to march on Antony and Octavius. In the battle which follows, Cassius, misled by erroneous reports of loss, persuades a slave to kill him; Brutus's army is defeated. Brutus commits suicide, praised by Antony as "the noblest Roman of them all."

