

23 April, 1900
Monday
3:00am

Dear diary,

Today was the opening day of *The History of Cardenio*. We performed in the Jean de Brébeuf Amphitheater. The play began at 11pm and ran until 1am: we wanted to span the days of both April 22 and April 23 (*Shakespeare and Cervantes died on the same date, though not the same day. Spanning two days gave us a better chance of encompassing the death days of them both*).

The performance was a triumph. Of course, it was exciting for everyone to see a performance of a rediscovered play which had been lost for 300 years. That meant that the crowd was eager: we did not advertise for fear of making a national spectacle of our humble university, but still we attracted audience members from on and off campus and it was standing room only.

I came to the university for its reputation for academic excellence, particularly for its world-renown English Literature department. I loved to read as a boy, and was somewhat like Charles Dickens, acting out each of the parts in my room. I did this with *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of the La Mancha* and what fun I had! The multitude of characters whose voices jump off of the page! Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, Grisóstimo, Cardenio, Ruy Perez...how much fun I would have. Which is why I was elated to hear, in my freshman year above all times, that the University came into possession of a lost Shakespeare play- not only a Shakespeare play but a Shakespeare play inspired by *Don Quixote*! You can only imagine how quickly I raced to the auditions, ready to be heralded by history as a William Sly or a Richard Burbage for my unforgettable performance of a Shakespearean masterpiece. I was confident, perhaps too confident, in my performance abilities. I knew myself to be capable of voicing a great knight, a brave Christian captive, a scorned lover...

But my beard has not yet come in. My voice is still unfitting for a great knight or a great lover. I sound more like my Aunt Victoria. So the director, a true Shakespearean, noticing my talent for performance and my feminine features, decided to bring back the old Elizabethan tradition of casting young boys for female roles. So yes, my Fenwick stage debut was as Luscinda. I had to act alongside the heart-throb Thomas Jones. And so my plans for a triumphant performance were foiled as most people simply laughed at me, (my voice has dropped enough so that I am not to be fully mistaken for a woman, even in that dreaded costume).

I still must admit, I enjoyed the show. I became a true Elizabethan young man. And also, this play has provided me with a memorable lesson to take away from my first year at Fenwick University: humility. How am I to be prideful ever again when I am to be heralded for all ages as the fair and gentle Luscinda? Well, I can join the audience and have a good laugh and not let my ridiculousness ruin the evening. The show was a great success, the music was impeccable, the acting (if I do say so myself) was on par with the King's Men, and I have hope that one day I will sound more like Thomas and less like my Aunt Victoria.