**“Deck the Halls”**

**A Tudor Christmas Play with Carols and Songs**

**Suitable for Key Stage 1 and 2**

***Premise;*** *Christmas Eve 1543 the year of King Henry VIII’s marriage to Catherine Parr. The servants are decorating the palace with boughs of Holly and ivy in preparation for the Christmas Festivities. King Henry and his new Queen will host a Christmas gathering, inviting all the Kings three children to the Palace of Greenwich for the festivities.*

*Notes on staging; Members of the chorus, all dressed in Tudor costume (or an approximation of)will be arranged either (depending on the space) at the back of the stage/performing area or to the sides on benches.*

**SCENE 1**

*The scene starts with the chorus and servants singing “Deck the halls with boughs of holly” as the servanys carry garlands and decorate the stage area. If there is a raised stage I suggest they hang the garlands along the front of the raised stage.*

**SONG: “DECK THE HALLS”**

**SUSAN** Its Christmas Eve, I’m so excited!

**AGNES** I know I love Christmas!

**SUSAN** And to think the King’s three children will be together at last!

**AGNES** Happy Times! All three under one roof! The Lord be thankful!

**SUSAN** It shall be a happy Christmas thanks to our New Queen**.**

**AGNES** I know Queen Catherine is a good woman, I have never seen the King happier!

**SUSAN** After so much unhappiness it is wonderful to see , and what a relief to have found such a good mother for his three children at last!

**AGNES** It can’t have been easy for the poor mites, especially for young princess Mary, fancy having six mothers!

**SUSAN** I don’t know, she’s not a child anymore what is she twenty seven now, it’s the young’uns I feel sorry for. Lady Elizabeth is only ten, and the Prince is just turned six.

**AGNES** It will be wonderful for them to play together at last after so many years of separation, and poor Elizabeth bundled off to live with her mothers cousin Lady Bryan, it can’t have been easy for her, after losing her mother in such a horrible way! (*both touch their necks and shudder)*.

**BOB** Ladies Ladies stop your chatter and hurry up! The decorations won’t hang themselves…hurry hurry!

**Susan &**

**Agnes** Alright…Keep your hair on! (*giggles)*

**BOB** All must be ready for the bringing in of the yule log. You know how the King loves these traditions. Hurry, hurry!!

**SCENE 2**

**TOM** Make haste… The King is coming…Hurry, Hurry (*shoo’s the serving wenches to the side and stands back sounding the fanfare to make way for the king)*

*Off stage much laughter Enter the King followed by the Queen, his two daughters and a few courtiers, the children’s Tutor and finally Charles Brandon with the young Prince dragging the Yule log behind them. As the King enters the servants bow and courtesy and drop their heads onto their chests in deference. More laughter*

**KING** Heave, heave my son, show us your Tudor strength!

**CHARLES** Young Edward has the strength of Goliath my friend,,,,see I am barely needed. (*he steps back and stops pulling the log…while the Prince tries and strains to pull the log , which does not move ….. Everyone laughs)*

**QUEEN** Don’t tease the lad, Edward is barely six years old! You wait until he is twice his age, then he’ll show you.

**KING** By then I’ll wager he’ll have the strength of TEN men! And the heart of a lion like his Father!*(He lifts his son in the air and they both roar like lions! Everyone laughs)*

**EDWARD** I’ll have the heart of a King of England!

**KING** So true my son , so true.

**EDWARD** Father , what do we do with the log now?

**KING** We put it on the hearth.

**EDWARD** Why?

**KING** It is an old tradition dating back to the time of the Vikings! (*Roars again)*

**EDWARD** But Why?

**KiNG** Your Tutor must answer that one**.**

**TUTOR** Your Highness**,** your Majesty **, (***Bows to each in turn)* It is supposed to bring Good Luck. The Log symbolises for us Christians the Cross of Jesus. And we burn it on the hearth throughout the twelve Days of Christmas, from Christmas Day to Twelfth Night on the 6th of January. We shall place the Yule upon the fire tonight and light it tomorrow.

**MARY** And when the log is all burned up we will keep some of its charred embers to light the fire again next Christmas.

**QUEEN** Enough talk of the Yule, we must be off to Church to say our prayers.

**ELIZABETH** But it’s supper time!

**EDWARD** Yes I’m hungry!

**MARY (***crossly)* Really sister have some respect! You know the rules! Christmas Eve is a time of FASTING.

**ELIZ** But we are hungry.

**MARY** Really sister! Say your prayers like good children and stop your whining… You are in the Royal Palace now and must behave accordingly.

**TUTOR** Children, listen to your sister. Today we must fast and say our prayers.

**KING** For tomorrow we shall FEAST FEAST FEAST until our bellies are bloated and big (*Sticks out his belly and pats it then Exits followed by his courtiers , charles and wife)*

**EDWARD** Until we pop Father! (*giggles)*

**ELIZ (***grabs her brothers hand and giggles)* Tomorrow we will Feast, feast , feast (*Exit skipping followed by their tutor)*

**BOB** Come on girls we too must go to church. And after that you’ll be needed in the kitchens, for there’s a banquet to prepare.

SUSAN No rest for the wicked! (*Exit all)*

**CHORUS SINGS: “DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH”**