

# **LONG TITLES ARE GREAT BUT HOW AM I GOING TO REMEMBER IT FOR THE FORENSICS TOURNAMENT? OR, IN SHORT—RED**

**By Kelly Meadows**

Copyright © 2012 by Kelly Meadows, All rights reserved.

ISBN 1-60003-644-9

**CAUTION:** Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

**RIGHTS RESERVED:** All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

**PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS:** All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

**AUTHOR CREDIT:** All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

**PUBLISHER CREDIT:** Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

***Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC***

**COPYING:** Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

## LONG TITLES ARE GREAT BUT HOW AM I GOING TO REMEMBER IT FOR THE FORENSICS TOURNAMENT? OR, IN SHORT—RED

by  
Kelly Meadows

**Cast 1M, high-school aged. The speaker is discussing his experience in selecting and preparing a play for a drama competition.**

**Set: This play can be performed on a bare stage.**

Playwrights—you are making our lives unbearable. Thanks to you and your ridiculous titles, practically my entire school has been disqualified from the forensics tournament. Why? (*admonishing the writers*) Because we can't remember what your play is called. (*explaining his outburst*) In an attempt to stand out in a crowded catalog, many of you are creating longer and longer titles so you can appear to be cute, cuddly and oh-so-much more imaginative than the writers listed above and below.

Sure, first impressions make a difference. Say your name is Flavius Julius Romulus Castor-Oil the Third, as opposed to (*short pause*) Jane Smith. Jane, however, could be anything but plain! Flavius Julius could be as cultured as a pig at a slop trough, coasting through life on Purina Hog Chow and name recognition alone.

Still, our school's comic monologue aspirations turned to tragedy as student after student floundered on titles that were running two, three, even four pages long—one was practically as long as the play itself. By the time the title was over, so was the ten minutes allowed for competition.

(*aggravated!*) Here's some advice! Your play is not your title! Here's a title. "Proof." "Chess." "Madame Bovary." And yes, I read it, in French. I don't know French, so I didn't understand a word, but I read it!

(*another long title, say it in one breath!*) "How I Got a Rhinoceros Into the Elevator at Sachs and What Happened When it Stopped on the 12<sup>th</sup> Floor and the Lady from the Furniture Department Wondered Why the Store Smelled Like a Circus" (*take a breath!*) is not a title, it's a *Huffington Post* blog.

(*much more congenial*) That's why my monologue is called... (*prepares to announce, proud and defiant*) Red.

**Long Titles Are Great But How am I Going to Remember it for the Forensics Tournament? Or, in Short-Red - Page 3**

*(confident of his choice)* For a long time, I had to convince my fellow actors that “Red” was worthwhile. They were tripping over their titles, making fun of me and treating me like an outcast in the *Glee* cast... treating me like *(as HE continues, the audience should realize that this happened to the speaker)* that one last Justin Bieber fan standing alone and humiliated on a cold dark sidewalk after the concert starts—because there was one ticket left and it went to *(disgusted)* Flavius Castor-Oil the Third.

I saw red, for sure.

I'll never forget Flavius on his way in to the concert. *(as Flavius, snotty and spoiled)* “I don't even like Justin Bieber. But knowing *you* can't hear him makes it all the better.”

*(annoyed)* Justin!*(talking to an imaginary Justin Bieber)* Have a seat, Justin, and listen to yourself:

*(crass and egotistical, winking and playing with his hair)* I'm Justin Bieber, and I'm so successful. Me. Just me. I'm going to be 16 forever—and when you're old, crumpled, and gray, I'll still be 16 and dating the girl you used to love. And she'll be two feet taller than me.”

*(explaining himself, and finally taking his hand out of his hair)* I just went to meet girls during intermission. I mean, come on, 20,000 girls think they have a shot at Justin, so there's a lot of rebounding to sort through. Definitely worth the price of admission to pick up on a few tears, yet *(angry)* Flavius Castor-Oil took my seat. *(vengeful!)* I hope there was soda on it. *(like an evil professor)* Old, sticky, Dr. Pepper leftover from a *Wheel of Fortune* tour.

Karla Hightower was a senior, and queen of the drama club—in her dreams. Her play had a title as long as the Indy 500. We had to roll it out on a tape measure. *(as Karla, bouncy, yet rude, and sniffy)* “I know we're from the same school and all, *(sniff)* but short titles are not the rage. You're making *us* look bad. *(sniff)* Like, you know, your outfit makes *you* look bad, your play makes *me* look bad.*(sniff)* Thanks to you we're going to lose the tournament and...”

*(reacting, quickly)* “Karla, stick it in a sock!”

*(as Karla, not letting it get to her)* “They're not socks. They're called ‘foot warming devices-slash-fashion accessories, largely hidden by shoes and pants.’ What a waste of a fashion accessory socks can be—*(short laugh and sigh)* on *you*.”

I pulled up my socks and walked on.

**Long Titles Are Great But How am I Going to Remember it for the Forensics Tournament? Or, in Short-Red - Page 4**

Red. That's what I said.

A student named Geronimo Shortemper premiered a play called "Elephant in the Room—colon—How I Got a Date With the Zookeeper's Daughter—dash—a Guide to Using Animals to Win a Date With Practically Anybody—dash, again—Especially if They're Related to the Zookeeper." Quite a dashing title! He made it through that, but messed up on the playwright's name, a pseudonymicmashup resulting in the moniker of CornucopiusErrorniusRefrageratum. I think it means "you left the vegetables out in the heat and they spoiled."

*(waving, with mock sadness)* Bye, Geronimo.

*(something comes to mind!)* You may actually remember CornucopiusErrornius. He gained traction due to another piece he wrote called "Engine." It won a national tournament in three different years.

"Engine" is the tragic story of a pressure washer that was picked to squirt off the Lincoln Memorial. *(theatrical and emotional!)* And how the other pressure washers, consigned to hosing down barnacles in the Potomac, became jealous and plotted a horrible revenge. The scheming engines contracted with a longshoreman to drain the oil out of the celebrity washer so that the next morning, rather than a blissful day of hosing down President Lincoln, our hero's mechanism jerked to a halt. The monologue ended tragically as the engine was replaced with an inferior model which has, to this day, left us with a very dirty 16<sup>th</sup> president.

Included in the play were the tragic mechanic from Henry's Housework: "Would you like some Penzoil, my tired friend?"

And the voice of Engine: *(sad and droopy)* "What's the use? It just reminds me of my spray days of yore."

Other writers, determined to knock Cornucopius off his perch, started to parody this, and the long title was born. "Yes Virginia, That's Really the President's Pressure Washer, or Would You Rather Get Up There With a Rag and a Bucket of Ammonia Water and Do It Yourself," was the title that started off the craze, and it's been mayhem ever since.

Hence, I'm going to be Red—and revolutionary!

People are already lining up to forecast my demise, much like they long for the downfall of Britney, Beyoncé, Justin B., Justin T., Mariah, and Lady Gaga!

**Long Titles Are Great But How am I Going to Remember it for the Forensics Tournament? Or, in Short-Red - Page 5**

(as someone else, offended!!) "How dare you say such things about Lady Gaga! She'll never be out of vogue!" That's my uncle, age 40. (yelling back at Uncle.) And Vogue is Madonna!

Then there's (like an obsessed schoolgirl) "Justin Bieber knows what love is, and who are you to disparage his great artistry!" That's my other uncle. He's 50.

(as his own mother) "You're just jealous of anyone who's better off than you! And by the way that would include the entire world plus the global population of Indian elephants!" That's my mother.

(HE's heard this before) "I know, mom!"

But like the Gaga herself, I'm a trendsetter who can't be upstaged! When I found it, "Red" was languishing in my drama director's script perusal pile.

(as the drama teacher, smooth and uppity) "Are you sure you want this, Barton? While the monologue is amusing and deftly composed, you won't engage the listener nearly as well as with some half-wit tome bearing a long silly title."

"I want 'Red'," I said.

(humph! As the teacher) "You want 'Red'."

"That's what I said," I said. "I want 'Red'."

The contest was on, and only one from our school would advance.

***Thank you for reading this free excerpt from LONG TITLES ARE GREAT BUT HOW AM I GOING TO REMEMBER IR FOR THE FORENSICS TOURNAMENT? OR IN SHORT-RED by Kelly Meadows. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:***

**Brooklyn Publishers, LLC  
P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406  
Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011  
[www.brookpub.com](http://www.brookpub.com)**