



GRADUATE PROGRAM IN
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

December 5, 2016

I am writing in support of Stephanie Ann Foster's application for funding to complete her one-woman show, *Tribulation Periwinkle: The Civil War Sketches of Louisa May Alcott*, an endeavor which aptly combines her love for theatre and for writers of children's literature.

Stephanie Ann enrolled in the Hollins M.F.A. Program in Children's Literature in 2009 and graduated in 2014. While at Hollins, she proved herself an innovative and skilled writer as well as an excellent scholar. In 2013 she won the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Scholarship with a manuscript which our writer in residence that year, David Almond, praised as "unusual, well-written, pacy. . . its apparent weirdness is nicely matched up with a believable emotional base." In addition she gave the most insightful assessment of a very difficult magical realist short story (Ursula K. Le Guin's "Horse Camp") that I have yet seen. I have been using her analysis to explain that story to my students ever since.

One of the hallmarks of Stephanie Ann's time at Hollins was her desire to combine her love for literature with her love for theatre. Her final presentation for my class in magical realism was a video that was as impressive for its structure and editing as for the astute observations on her chosen text. She participated in a summer abroad trip with the Hollins program and while in the U.K. completed another M.A. degree in Shakespeare Education at the same time. During her last summer in residence she adapted and then directed *Pericles* for the youth branch of the American Shakespeare Center.

The degree of dedication and organization necessary to complete these endeavors simultaneously speaks to Stephanie Ann's dedication and organizational abilities. She was never late with an assignment and always signed up for the earliest presentation slots in her classes. Whatever she undertakes, she will finish with excellent results.

Since leaving Hollins she has compiled an impressive list of publications. Her imaginative large-cast stage adaptation of the beloved children's classic *A Little Princess* has enjoyed six youth productions so far, including at Mosaic Children's Theatre, which called it "the best version out there." "Hey! Who Barded in Here?!" highlighted her work on Shakespeare and the senses in *Teaching Shakespeare Magazine*. Her chapter "Finding Your Match" is featured in *The Shakespeare Audition: How to Get Over Your Fear, Find*

the Right Piece, and Have a Great Audition (Applause Acting Series, 2015) by Laura Wayth.

Her magical realist short story "Crawling Blue" was included in the inaugural (2016) issue of *The Crawl Space Journal*. "The Potato and the Pomegranate" was her contribution to a collection of children's literature commissioned by the Ethiopian branch of the Peace Corps to include local traditions and Ethiopian names. It was published in-country as a four-book set, *Eager for English*.

I believe that Stephanie Ann Foster is a playwright who will have a long and successful career in youth theater. She deserves your support in helping complete *Tribulation Periwinkle: The Civil War Sketches of Louisa May Alcott*. Please don't hesitate to call or email me if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda Cockrell".

Amanda Cockrell
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