



The World is a Stage

Tamara Morgan

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Danger comes packaged in bulging muscles...and a codpiece.

Games of Love, Book 2

Highland Games athlete Michael O'Leary is famous for his ability to charm a woman right out of her pants. Maybe a little too famous. When he's sidelined with a knee injury, his wingman pounces on the chance to take full advantage of Michael's idle time.

Trying out for the local adult-themed Shakespearean production seems simple, but there's a catch. Michael must woo the notoriously demanding lead actress, Rachel Hewitt, thereby freeing his friend to pursue a courtship of Rachel's sister.

Rachel hates the thought of handing over the lead role in her admittedly scandalous troupe to someone so wholly uneducated in the ways of the Great Bard. But she's in a bind, and the only one who can step up is a man who looks way too good in a codpiece—and knows it.

To add insult to injury, he refuses to take the role until she agrees to take his place in some barbaric warrior race. She'll do it, but not with a smile. Unfortunately, the hardest part isn't antagonizing her Scottish foes. It's resisting the one man who seems determined to line and cue her heart—forever.

Warning: This book's half-naked Shakespearean actors are not approved of or acknowledged by people with actual literary merit. Neither are the dirty limericks.

The World is a Stage Details

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From Reader Review The World is a Stage for online ebook

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Slick's review posted on Guilty Pleasures

4.5 Stars

Since I thoroughly enjoyed the first book in this series, *Love is a Battlefield*; I couldn't wait to get my hands on this book. *The World is a Stage* is every bit as good as the first, if not better. Better only because our hero Michael O'Leary is such a loveable (albeit a foul mouthed and sex on the brain) hunk.

Michael is coming to terms that his days as a Highland games athlete are pretty much over due to an injury. He's at a cross roads, he lives a comfortable but simple life on a lentil farm with the man that pretty much raised him. He knows he needs something more in his life but he's not sure what. He's a good friend, no let me rephrase that...he's a great friend. He goes out of his way to do things for others never asking for anything in return. And, he does it with humor, a great attitude, and an infectious spirit. I seriously wanted to jump into the book and grab this man for one of my friends. (When she reads this she'll know who she is and after she reads the book, she'll want him without doubt.)

I wish I could say I liked our heroine as much as our hero, but I can't. Rachel Hewitt is hard to like. She's overbearing, pompous, and at times rude. However, Tamara lets us know early on that she's flawed and gives us some insight as to why so while I didn't love her, I didn't really hate her either. She ticked me off a lot, but I'm sure that was the plan.

Michael as a favor to his friend Peterson and his girlfriend Molly (Rachel's sister), agrees to help "manage" Rachel. Molly wants Rachel to get to know Peterson because she already knows her sister won't like him. It becomes evident really quick that Rachel isn't going to be easily managed, not even for Michael who can charm most anyone. I absolutely loved the interplay between these two characters. Rachel would lash out at Michael and he'd say something utterly inappropriate or funny that would catch her off guard. She'd get riled up, he'd smooth it over. These two do quite the mating dance and all through it, I found myself laughing (sometimes out loud) or screaming "just do it already!" I really appreciate that Tamara takes her time building up the tension with her characters because when they do finally get together it's always very special.

Besides the romance between Michael and Rachel, there are several other stories within this story. Because I don't want to spoil it, I will say that some are heartbreaking, some are exciting, and some are daunting. They all take a big role in the way this story plays out. This is a fairly complex book and while the majority of it focuses on Michael and Rachel, their lives are forever changed by the other events taking place throughout the story.

Both Michael and Rachel end up having to face some things about themselves that neither wants to face. This leads to some serious soul searching especially on Rachel's part. They somehow manage to get through it and figure out that their lives will never be boring. This is another amazing book in the *Love Games* series by Tamara Morgan. I am already anticipating the next one!

Liz at Fictional Candy says

The World is a Stage is book 2 in the Games of Love series, but I didn't feel lost without having first read book one. I believe book one is about Julian, who only makes minor appearances in this story. So if you haven't read book one, have no fear and read on!

In this story the main storyline focuses around Michael and Rachel. The substory is about Molly and Eric (aka Peterson, his last name), but really, its still all about Michael and Rachel. Peterson, as he's known to his male friends, asks Michael to basically run interference with the uptight sister of the girl he is into. Michael, who has a heart of gold (and abs of stone, ahem...) begrudgingly agrees. The only thing he didn't realize is how far in he would exactly get.

"I know I acted like a three legged jerk tonight. If it makes you feel any better, I doubt I'll be able to sleep a wink tonight, what with the guilt and shame eating at my soul." –Michael to Rachel

Michael is quite a smart-ass. He is full of quips and snarky remarks. But in the truth and honest parts of him, he is very sincere and caring, willing to do anything for those that he cares about. And if Michael cares about you, you can consider yourself a lucky person indeed. He also an athlete in the Highland Games organization, so you know right off that this man is big, bulky, and well, hot. He really has a giant personality that I just love. I've never been a girl into the kilt-wearing fellas, but after this story I might change my mind! Michael is so unique and brazen, he wears his kilt even in off season times. Oh, and not lets forget his tattoos. Oh my goodness, how I love a man covered in tattoos! Michael has got them, and I'd love to see them for myself!

Rachel is the uptight overprotective sister of Molly. They were together putting on risqué versions of Shakespearian plays. While it is obvious throughout the story that Rachel has great talent on stage, there were definitely times where I just didn't like this woman at all. I mean sure, there are the battle of wills and bickering arguments with Michael, and that was all very entertaining. But Rachel also has a way of taking things WAY too far in terms of her over-protection of Molly. The things that she does... well, I can't say I'd want to remain her friend, let alone her family, afterwards. However, as despicable as some of her actions are, you know that they are coming from a place of good, so you have no choice – you want to see what will happen next. When Rachel and Michael are just one on one, and there is no one else around, and they are consumed by each other's presence, its absolutely perfect. I really loved those times. When Rachel is Rachel, and not Molly's sister, she is a wonderful woman with a great sense of humor and a tremendous caring side.

Michael and Rachel are like oil and vinegar at the beginning. He likes to needle her and push her limits, she likes to yell and be mean to him. But you can tell instantly that there is chemistry there. And that's what I like to see, because without that chemistry you've got nothing.

There is a lot of drama that happens in this story, along with some very funny moments too. The characters are all really terrific. Peterson and Molly are quite a pair, and I'm almost hoping they get their own book, but I'm not entirely sure if that could work. There is quite a bit of raw emotions in this book. You can definitely feel the sadness and depression at some times, and yet at others you on top of the world with the elation of these great characters. I definitely think that if you like romance you should give this book a try, you will not be disappointed.

Heather Book Savvy Babe says

I absolutely loved book 1 in the Games of Love series, Love is A Battlefield. So, when I found out the series was continuing, I was excited to read book 2. The World is A Stage takes a whole different turn from book 1. Instead of a war between period dress-up groups, a Highland Games athlete meets his match in a shrewish Shakespearean actress. I loved reading The World is a Stage, this book had me laughing out loud and actually cheering for a nasty heroine.

The World is A Stage is essentially a modern re-telling of the Taming of the Shrew--a hilariously awesome re-telling. Michael is a Highland Games athlete who, because of injuries, is on the brink of retirement from the Games. Michael is a big, muscular, intimidating flirt. He loves women, and uses his irreverent humor to flirt with any and all women he comes across. When a friend and fellow athlete asks him to be his wing-man and keep a girlfriend's sister distracted, Michael agrees. However, he never expected just how ill-tempered this sister would be, or his attraction to her, or that he would end up wearing a cod piece instead of a kilt. Rachel is an actress in a "Shakespeare After Dark" (Shakespeare performed adult style) production troupe. She has had many disappointments in her life and as a result, became very protective of her younger sister. Rachel buried her feelings deep and closed herself off from everyone. When her sister brings home another dangerous looking man, Rachel is determined to protect her. However, Rachel makes instant judgements and her rash actions may isolate her for good.

I did not like Rachel, the woman really is a shrew. She is horribly bitchy, she makes instant negative judgements, she is determined to always be right, and she never stops to care about anyone's feelings, not even her own. However, Michael is the opposite. He is easy going, unruffled by Rachel's scathing comments, and determined to help his friends. The humor throughout the book, especially Michael's, is outrageous and so funny that I didn't want to put the book down. The World is a Stage is filled with funny one-liners, arguments, and entertaining moments that Rachel's negative character is perfectly balanced throughout the book. Michael's injuries force him to figure out a new path for his life, and his generous and caring heart stand out. Michael slowly thaws Rachel's icy exterior and makes her re-evaluate her own choices and actions.

The World is a Stage is a wildly entertaining book, however it is also a very satisfying read as well. The characters all learn and grow, and there is never a dull moment. I never wanted to put the book down, even when I was so upset by the heroine. It is a testament to Tamara Morgan's writing skills that she can write such a horrible heroine in a way that makes the reader want to forgive her sins (eventually...). Tamara Morgan's writing is clever, creative, well-developed, and thoroughly satisfying. The World is a Stage is hilarious, full of awesome one liners, wonderful characters, and super sweet romance. Readers, if you love romances and have a sense of humor, you absolutely **MUST READ** the Games of Love series by Tamara Morgan.

I received this book for review

Alexia Reed says

I'm constantly impressed with the depth and range of characters Tamara writes. Not only are they interesting, but each is its own individual. That's not something easy to do, but Tamara pulls it off flawlessly. Not only the characters, but she mixes concepts you wouldn't normally think of.

Michael and Rachel are completely different from each other and yet, Tamara manages to make it work between them. I laughed so much with this book because honestly, you can't do otherwise with Michael. I loved this book!

Heather in FL says

First off, DISCLAIMER: this is from Samhain but there is NO explicit sex in this book. There is a certain expectation of a Samhain story, and this is the second Samhain story I've read where there's been no sex. That's not to say the characters don't have sex -- they do -- but we don't get to follow along with them. Pity, that.

That said, I really enjoyed this book. First off, a Scottish Highland Games competitor slash lentil farmer? How the heck did the author come up with that combo? And Michael has a heart of gold (and abs of steel and thighs like tree trunks... and apparently a previously unknown thespian flair). The wacky occupations actually fit him to a tee. Probably a slightly stretched one since he was so brawny.

Michael has been tasked with occupying Rachel so she doesn't notice the budding relationship between his friend Eric and her sister Molly. Rachel is a tad (that's an understatement) over-protective of her sister, who has had some bad luck in relationships in the past. Rachel takes one look at Eric and knows -- just KNOWS - - he's trouble. So Eric convinces the big hearted Michael to just distract her. And he does this with aplomb.

Not that she's totally distracted. She still does what she does and gets her nose into it, but at the same time, the banter between Rachel -- who spews venom -- and Michael -- who spews dirty limericks -- is just hilarious. And over time, they start to get to know each other, and Michael starts to see through to who she really is as opposed to what she shows the rest of the world out of a sense of self-preservation. And she starts to recognize that Michael is not at all what she first thought.

Rachel learns a really tough lesson, but she does it with poise and learns to be humble and contrite. Even though I didn't get the nookie I expected, it was still a great story. Now I have to go back and read #1 since I totally forgot this was a #2, lol. (And BTW, Samhain has these great disclaimers... maybe they need to warn us if there's NOT sex in the story, lol!)

Krissys says

The World Is A Stage is a surprisingly enjoyable read and although its Samhain published there isn't the heat factor but really isn't necessary for the readers enjoyment. The story is emotionally realistic. Everyone goes through hard times and not everyone has a perfect life, nor are their family members or themselves perfect. But even imperfect people can find love.

Lauren says

Love, love, love this series. No, it is not extremely erotic. But it does have enough that still makes me happy. It is a fun and light romance. You really do end up rooting for the hero!

Anne Dirty Girls' Good Books says

I think I smiled from ear to ear reading this book! I was lucky enough to win an ARC during Smart Bitch Sarah's April online book chat about the first book in the series, *Love is a Battlefield*. These two books are in a series, but I think *The World is a Stage* would stand easily on its own. Michael was my favorite character in the previous book and I was happy that he kept his character and smart mouth here. He is crass and full of himself, but in an utterly charming way. He describes himself like this: *"Michael knew he was a confident man. Some might even call him cocky. God he hoped they did. He loved that word."*

Michael is playing wingman to a friend and is paired up with Rachel, an actress in a Slutty Shakespeare theater. Rachel was difficult to like, but I did. I could see why she made the choices she made, even when I was screaming at her not to. They were a good match together, too. Michael saw through her caustic exterior and didn't mind using verbal warfare to break down her guard. I'm a sucker for that.

I liked the strong and consistent characterizations in this book. It was believable to me that Michael would see Rachel as a challenge and how that just fueled his attraction. I liked that it was real-life messy. There were some conflicts with grey areas that weren't magically resolved. I thought it was a good story.

There were a couple things that bugged me. I was caught a little off guard with the serious and sad side of Rachel and her sister's lives. I think it was because I'd gone in thinking "fluffy, funny story." However, the sad past history made sense and it worked with the story. Also, it's not a very explicit book with a lot of sex, though there's plenty of sexual tension. That might be a bonus for some readers, but I wanted more.

By far, the highlight of the book was the dialog between Michael and Rachel that kept me laughing. Full of double entendre, it is just funny. I'll end with one of my favorite excerpts, an exchange that takes place at a picnic on Michael's farm:

"You are impossible," Rachel said through her teeth. Speaking of a man's faults. "Do you understand the concept of social cues? Do I look like I want to eat your meat and examine your crops right now?"

He cocked his head to the side, considering. "Yes. Yes, I think you do. My meat is surprisingly tender."

I really enjoyed this book!

Kristen Koster says

Michael was amazing. Great second book in the series. Love the juxtaposition of the Highland Games Athletes against the more historical leaning heroines. And funny, Tamara Morgan is FUNNY! She nailed Michael O'Leary with a breath-takingly (because I was laughing so hard, you know, when your kids ask what's so funny and you can only say "this book" because it's not like... dinner table conversation?)

Pallavi Subramanian says

So I've been reading good reviews for this book online and quite a bit of snark for the heroine, so I figured let's check it out. It's also being billed as a funny contemporary, which is true I guess, but I got stuck on the sheer heartbreak for the heroine, Rachel.

Everyone should have a sister like Rachel. Yes, she is mean, yes, she is a bully and yes, she is cold, but you know what - I GET why she was all of that. Her Mom is fucked up, her childhood was fucked up and her sister Molly's taste in men sucks. Why is it ok for Molly to have have extremely poor taste in men as her fuck-up, but it is not ok for Rachel to become overly emotionally closed up as *her* fuck-up. I would any day prefer to be emotionally cold than get beaten up by my boyfriends. And you know what - Molly's taste in men DOES suck. (view spoiler) As far as Rachel can tell, Molly's new boyfriend is double her size AND has a history of violence. Plus he looks like a typical bad-boy with tattoos. Oh, and within weeks of meeting him, Molly gets a black eye. Yes, we, the readers, know it cannot possibly be Eric, but how would Rachel know? Knowing what any woman knows about the destructive, heartbreaking cycle of abuse, what is any normal woman supposed to think? WE, as readers, know that Eric is a good guy, but Rachel does not. She has NO WAY of knowing that. So yeah, count me in Team Rachel all the way.

And Michael really is the sweetest hero I've come across in a long time. My sense of humour is pretty bawdy so I was amused by him, but be warned, this book is a verrry dirty and potty-mouthed book.

Which brings me to my very important gripe. The sex scenes.

1. There is just one sex scene. Just one.
2. It is fade-to-black.

DUDE!! This is a freakin' Samhain book. The dialogues are a lot dirtier than the actual event. Wish I had more... Oh, well, you can't win 'em all.

The_Book_Queen says

Originally posted on TBQ's Book Palace

~*~*~*~

Tamara Morgan has done it again, giving readers a glimpse into the Highland Games Society, in a book filled with wit, dirty jokes, brawny men and strong women, not to mention a great romance! Be warned: you will sigh and blush a bit, and laugh out loud, which may cause others to look at your funny—ignore this and enjoy the book! :)

Michael O'Leary is a cocky, but totally loveable, guy. He knows he's a catch and he enjoys making jokes about it—and everything else he can think of. Dirty jokes are his specialty, and I doubt there's a teenage boy out there with a dirtier mind than Mikey! He's been competing in the Highland Games for years, but a reoccurring knee injury may finally take him out of the competition—for good. Then what will he do?

Rachel Hewitt followed in her mother's footsteps by becoming a stage actress. But rather than turning to booze and men, like her mother, Rachel goes for power, control, though she she doesn't yet realize it. She picks up after her mother—time and time again—and she's there for her sister, trying to protect her from dating the wrong guys (again). But she forgets about herself, and refuses to tie herself to anyone—physically or emotionally. When Molly gets involved with a man who looks like he can be the poster child for bad-boyfriend-choice, Rachel may take things too far in her quest to protect. Can she fix things or will Molly refuse to speak to her ever again?

Although *The World is a Stage* is much different from Morgan's first book, I loved it all the same. I loved the humor in this book—I think I spent the entire time reading the book with a smile on my face! Giggles may have also escaped my mouth. :) In short, it was a blast, a fun read with fun characters and writing, not to mention a great romance.

Michael—oh Michael! He was great, very unique and funny and dirty-minded, not to mention the fact that he can pull off wearing a kilt. Yum!

Now Rachel, although a strong heroine, kind of bugged me. I can understand her being a bit leery of men after all the problems Molly has had with them, but the lengths she goes to to get rid of Eric pissed me off. Eric was a good man—and father—and if Rachel had even attempted to learn more about him, get to know him, she would have known this. I wanted to shake her, many times over, and tell her to open her eyes, change the way she acted, realize that Michael was there for her and that Eric wasn't going to kill her sister.

Yes, she finally came around, but, for me, it took too long. But even this little character flaw wasn't enough to throw me off the book—another talent of Tamara's, I think. Being able to write characters and events that may bug us, but we still love the overall story all the more for it. :)

I was a bit disappointed in Rachel and Michael's relationship though. The sexual tension between them was pretty heated through most of the book, but the only love scene they received was not only short, but practically nonexistent. All we know is they had a sweet hour or two in the fields—not what I expected from that at all! Michael is more complex than many think, I'll agree, but he's still very much the kind of alpha man to press a woman against a wall and show her what she needs—and he never did. (sigh)

4.5 STARS! A fun (scratch that—hilarious!) contemporary, *The World is a Stage* is a great pick, and one I highly recommend. While reading the book, I had just as much fun highlighting Michael's (maaaany) dirty quotes as I did watching him finally get through to Rachel. And I'd like to say that if any romance series should be made into movies, it's Morgan's *Games of Love* series. They would both make great romantic comedies—and I'd be first in line to watch them! :) Just saying... If you loved book one, you'll love this one! And if you have yet to try Tamara's work, all I have to say is: what are you waiting for?

Emily says

The one time in her life that Rachel Hewitt decided to put herself first she ended up right back where she started and devastation followed in her wake. Every move she has made since then was to protect the one person she loves the most in the world, her sister Molly, which is why when it looks like Molly's relationship with Eric is becoming serious, Rachel decides to intervene. Eric needs his best friend Michael O'Leary's help in distracting Rachel, he wants his time with Molly to grow and Rachel is making it increasingly difficult. As a Highland Games athlete, Michael is always up for a challenge and Rachel is it. She is a cantankerous ball buster but he has a strategy to keep her off kilter even if it means that he is an understudy in Shakespeares after dark play where she is the star. As Michael and Rachel draw closer they both begin to realize that there is more to each other than what it seems.

I thought this was a delicious read, cleverly written and will have you entranced to see what will happen next. Rachel is a handful, even though you understand her reasoning, she provides some cringe worthy moments in her rationalization for doing what is right. Michael has a way of getting Rachel to really look at herself rather than deflecting on others.

Judy & Marianne from Long and Short Reviews says

Originally posted at: <http://longandshortreviews.blogspot.c...>

What could be better than a hero in a codpiece?

My first observation is that I was disappointed that this was not the naughty, saucy Shakespearean romp the back of the book promised me. My second is this story is so much more.

Ms. Morgan did not write careful, thoughtful characters. These folks are crude, loving, angry, talented, caring, vulgar . . . I could go on, but you get my point. Because these characters tend to read as “real”, this story can be difficult to read at times. When Rachel, our heroine, does something stupid, one just wants to yell at her. (I might recommend reading this away from other people if you tend to talk to your books while reading them!) The flip side includes crying, longing, and cheering for and with her.

Speaking of characters, our hero, Michael is definitely one who grabbed my attention. Hard headed, deeply loyal, with an amusing propensity for limericks, he tends to be on the vulgar side at times. Those who can be easily offended should beware. However, despite his vocabulary, and his occasional stubborn hard-headedness, he's a wonderful hero in so many different ways.

The secondary characters are no less well-crafted. From Rachel's sister Molly, to Michael's best friend Eric, to the girls' mother and Michael's uncle, they all leave a piece of themselves with you.

The addition of the Highland Games is a unique touch, and allows for some lovely descriptions of eye candy (as well as their hard work). It also gives Michael the opportunity to wear a kilt (and who amongst us doesn't love a man in a kilt?!)

Yes, there is more than one happily ever after, but the way they get there is definitely a roller coaster ride. If this roller coaster is one you want to hop on, you may want to purchase this book rather than borrow it – I think you'll want to visit these folks again!

Ellen says

I struggled to like Rachel. She was an angry bitter person and she was a controlling bitch. Even her PI told her not to go ahead with her actions.

Michael was adorable, funny and charming, but for the first part of the book I felt like there had to be more to him than flash, but we don't get to see it. Unfortunately the PI strikes again and the secrets are revealed in a bit of telling.

Still it was good and I'll read the next.

Lynelle says

The World is a Stage is the 2nd book in Tamara Morgan's Games of Love series and just as a absolutely

loved the 1st book, Love is a Battlefield, this book was no different.

Michael O'Leary, loooooove him! He has such a laid back personality and he uses jokes (often crude jokes) to lighten a tense situations. He is easy going, is able to enter into a situation with his eyes open and doesn't seem to miss anything. He is very easy to like and fall for ? He is part of a team that competes in The Scottish Highland Games, but struggles with a bad knee. But there is much more to Michael then his joking personality and being an athlete.

Rachel Hewitt, her sister Molly are members of a production team that performs adult-themed Shakespeare, as Michael refers to it. Rachel is a pretty hoity person at first glance. She doesn't seem very approachable and scowls a lot (well, at Michael anyway lol). Rachel didn't grow up with a very good role model for relationships. She carries a lot of guilt for not being home to help her sister through a difficult time. Therefore, Rachel has made it her duty to prevent Molly from getting into potentially bad relationships, and Molly is currently dating Michael's friend Eric Peterson. And Michael is recruited to help distract Rachel from interfering into their relationship.

I'll be honest I really wanted to smack Rachel, often. Now, she has a history that has led her to take the actions she does, and even though she opens up more while hanging out with Michael, I feel Tamara did a great job portraying how easy it is to resort to impulse decisions and take backward steps when scared. Rachel definitely redeemed herself by the end, thankfully. Michael is such a giving person, always helping his friends out and very good at seeing the good in people. Michael takes challenges and is able to turn it around into a positive, such as when he destroys his knee and can't participate in competitions anymore. I really just can't get over how much I love his character. I really like how the characters in Tamara's books are "real". Now I do normally tend to read paranormal/fantasy genres but I find that these books are refreshing, light, and realistic with the characters she creates and the conflicts they encounter.
