

William Shakespeare

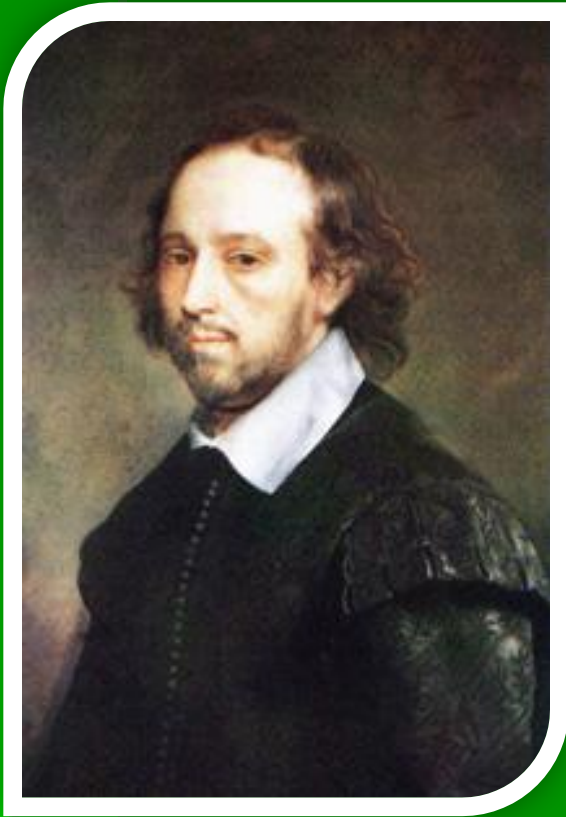


MEET BILL



William Shakespeare

- He was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford, a town about 100 miles northwest of London.
- He attended grammar school and studied Latin.



William Shakespeare

- At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway. *She was eight years older* than him.
- By 1592, Shakespeare had become an actor and a playwright.
- In 1594, he was a charter member of the “Lord Chamberlain’s Men”.



THE
COMPANY



William Shakespeare

- The “Lord Chamberlain’s Men” became the “**King’s Men**”.
- This was due to the sponsorship of the king ... **King James**.

Sound familiar?



- Yep, that's the same King James who wanted the Bible to be translated from Latin to English. Many people own the version of the Bible entitled "The King James Version"
- King James was a bit strange. But he did have the Bible re-translated into English, and he sponsored Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare

- When he “retired” – Shakespeare had written over 37 plays!
- Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616.



William Shakespeare

- Shakespeare was buried at Trinity Church in Stratford as an honored citizen. On his tombstone is carved a rather crafty inscription:

Good Friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here.

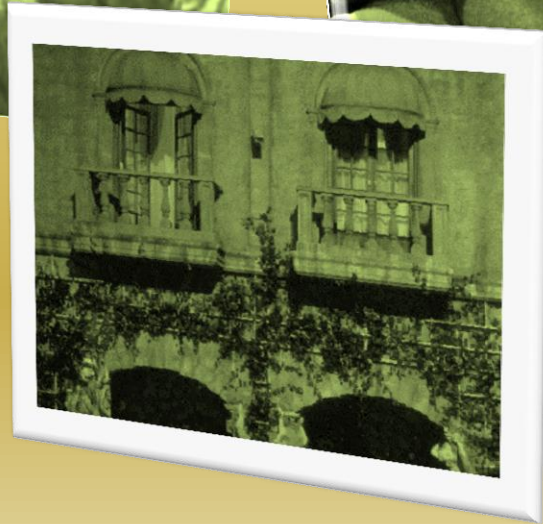
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he who moves my bones.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

ROMEO & JULIET

ROMEO AND JULIET



THE
TRAGEDY



ROMEO AND JULIET

- This was probably among the earlier plays that Shakespeare wrote.
- It is considered to be a **TRAGEDY** – not a *romance*.
- The story is taken from a long narrative poem by Arthur Brooke which was based on even earlier Italian stories. (He “borrowed” it.)

Stock Characters

- **Tybalt** – a bully, very cruel to all
- **Lord Capulet** – a loving father but very fussy and domineering (*bossy*)
- **Benvolio** – typical best friend character, a peacekeeper

Poetry and Prose

- blank verse – Poetry that is largely unrhymed.
- iambic meter – when an **unstressed syllable** is followed by a **stressed syllable**, as in the word pre-fer.

Iambic *Pentameter*

- This simply means that there are five of these “iambic units” in each line. This is an example spoken by Romeo:

“But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?”

Couplets

- When Shakespeare uses rhymes, he generally uses “couplets” (two consecutive lines of poetry that rhyme).

Good night! Good night!

Parting is such sweet **sorrow**

That I shall say goodnight till it be **morrow**.

Shakes' Plays ...

➤ Shakespeare expert Professor Engel says that one of three things always starts off a Shakespeare play:

1. Sexual Humor
2. Violence
3. The Supernatural



The Globe Theater

- ... the playhouse in which nearly all of Shakespeare's plays were performed during his lifetime
- In 1599, Shakespeare's theater – **The Globe** was built with the wood from another theater.

The Globe Theater

- The plays were performed in the afternoon.
- They had very few sets, so the setting was sometimes described by the actors
Such as: "Here we are in Room 146!"

The Globe Theater



What? ... NO WOMEN?

- Acting was not considered **respectable** by the English Puritans who often called the theater "*the devil's workshop*".
- Since it was not considered proper for even men to perform, it would be even less appropriate for a "lady" to take part in it.
- All women's parts were played by boys. In Shakespeare's day – Juliet was played by a pre-teen boy.

But if they were all guys, then ... ?

- This is why there are not many stage directions for kissing, “fooling around”, etc.
- *Most* of what you would see in a modern production was added in.

Romeo and Juliet

THEMES and *Motifs*

- love vs. lust (love, obsession, sex, etc.)
- light and dark (way of explaining the world)
- the individual's free will vs. Fate "the stars"

Romeo and Juliet

THEMES and *Motifs*

- differences between the young and the old
- a romantic vs. a realistic view of the world
- joy and sorrow (*love and death*)

ELIZABETHAN TIMES



Elizabethan Words

- **Maid** – a young, unmarried girl, typically a virgin “a good girl”
- **Jack** – a common guy, a “dude”
- **Mark** – to listen, pay attention to
(ex. “*mark my words*”)

Elizabethan Words

- **Soft!** - "Quiet!" "Hush!" "Shhh!"
- **Wherefore?** – "Why?"
- **Anon!** – "At once!" "Now!"
- **Humor** – a person's mood, state of mind

Elizabethan Words

- **God-den** – "Good evening"
- **Maidenhead** – virginity
- **Choler** - anger
- **Shrift** – confession for sins, or speaking a secret

“Star crossed lovers ...”

- The people really believed in astrology.
- They believed what happened in your life depended on what “star” you were born under.

“Star crossed lovers ...”

- Shakespeare probably did not believe this. In Julius Caesar (*one of his plays*) he writes:

“The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves...”

- You will see that Romeo and Juliet both **make decisions** that lead to destruction.

The culture of the day ...

Scientists of the day believed that we were made up of four elements:

- Air = Thought (airhead, windbag)
- Fire = Desire (hothead, flames of passion)
- Water = Emotions (swamped by emotions)
- Earth = Stability (solid as a rock)

The culture of the day ...

- The Shakespearean equivalent of “the finger” was “biting your thumb” at someone.

**DO YOU BITE
YOUR THUMB AT ME, SIR?**



Ben Jonson

- He wrote plays back then as well – he was always in competition with Shakespeare as was a guy named Christopher Marlowe.
- When Shakespeare died though, Ben Jonson wrote:

*“He was not of an age,
but for all time.”*

