

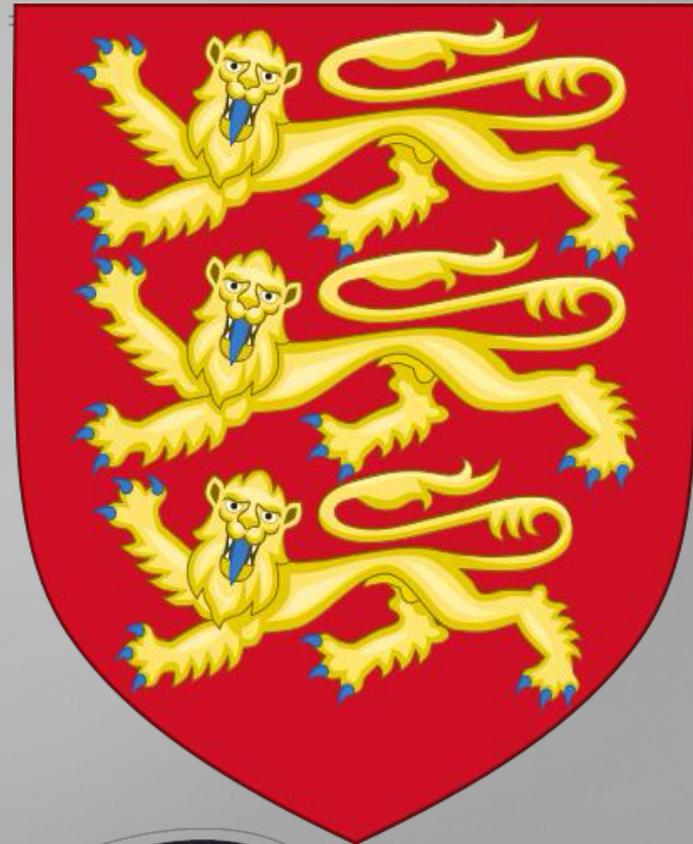


# MIDDLE ENGLISH

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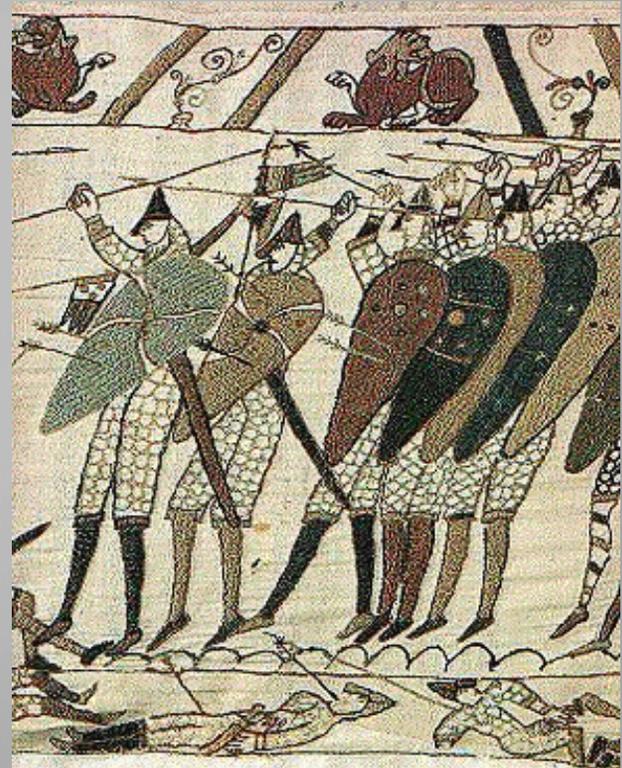
*1066 - 1500*

# MIDDLE ENGLISH



# MIDDLE ENGLISH HISTORY

- ❖ ... began in 1066 following the **Norman Conquest** of England.
- ❖ The Normans were Vikings who spoke a French dialect that would permeate English society.



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# HISTORY

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# HISTORY



... basically, a whole four and a half centuries full of chaotic social and political upheaval ...

# HISTORY

❖ ... which ends around 1500  
after the **printing press** is  
introduced to London in 1470.

❖ A dialect called Chancery  
Standard gained dominance for  
most official purposes.



# MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

❖ Significant literature from this time included chivalric romances, allegorical poems, religious plays, and more secular literature such as folk ballads.



# LITERATURE

Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales introduced iambic pentameter, the rhyming couplet, and other Italian conventions to English.



# LITERATURE



Other notable works include:

Sir Gawain and the Green

Knight (Anonymous), Piers

Plowman (Langland), and Le

Morte d'Arthur (Malory).

# MEDIEVAL THEMES

- ❖ courtly love
- ❖ chivalry
- ❖ devotion to God
- ❖ virtues and sins



# ARCHAIC LETTERS

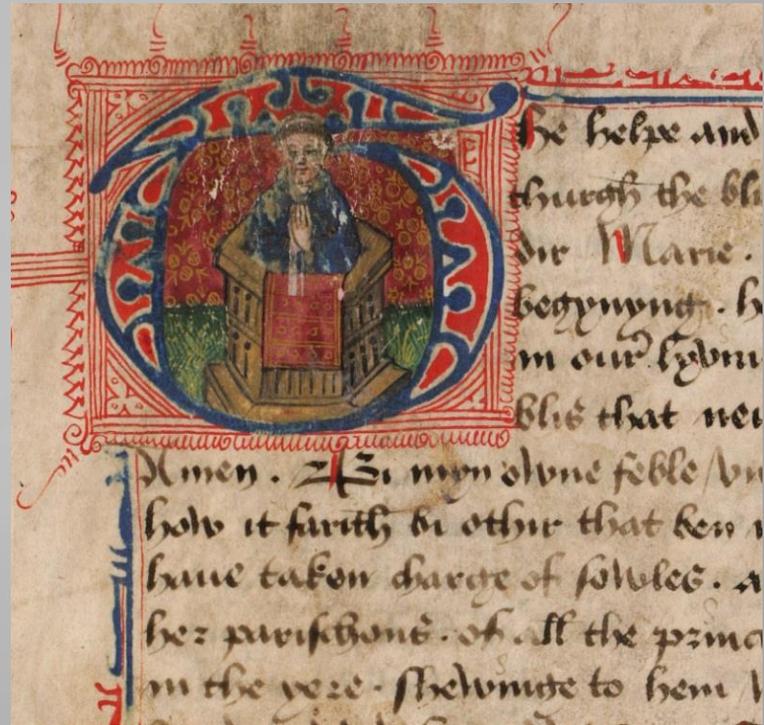
❖ Æ æ Ash

❖ Ð ð Eth

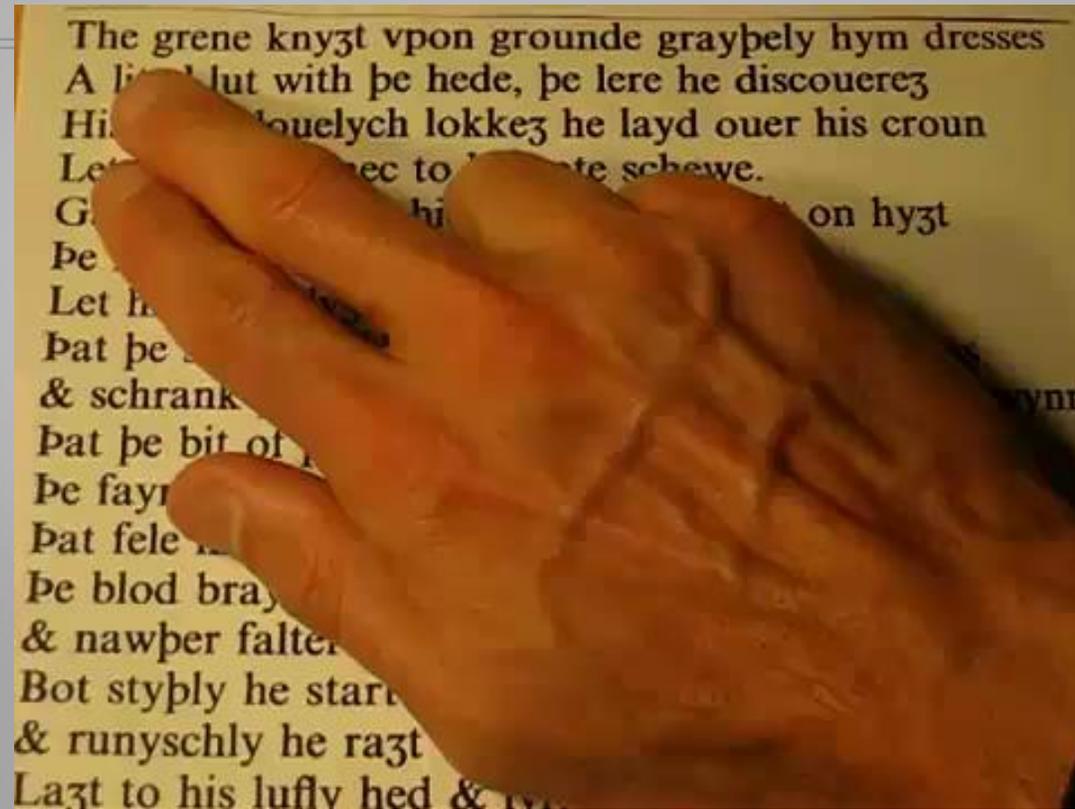
❖ ȝ ȝ Yogh

❖ Þ þ Thorn

❖ ƿ ƿ Wynn



# GAWAIN READING

A close-up photograph of a hand pointing to a page of text from a manuscript. The text is in Middle English and describes a scene where a knight (Gawain) is reading. The hand is positioned over the text, with the index finger pointing to the first line. The text is printed in a black serif font on a yellowish background.

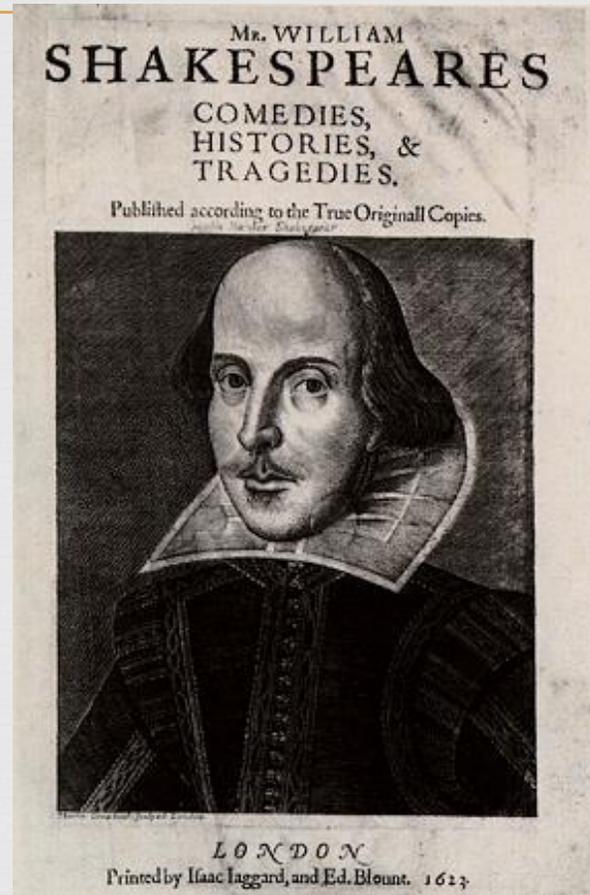
The grene knyzt vpon grounde graybely hym dresses  
A litle hut with þe hede, þe lere he discouerez  
His louelych lokkez he layd ouer his croun  
Let þe sec to þe schewe.  
Gawain hi on hyzt  
þe  
Let  
þat þe  
& schrank  
þat þe bit of  
þe fayr  
þat fele  
þe blod bray  
& nawper falter  
Bot stybly he star  
& runyschly he razt  
Lazt to his luffv hed & r

# Early Modern English and The Elizabethan Era



1500 - 1650

# Early Modern English



# Early Modern English



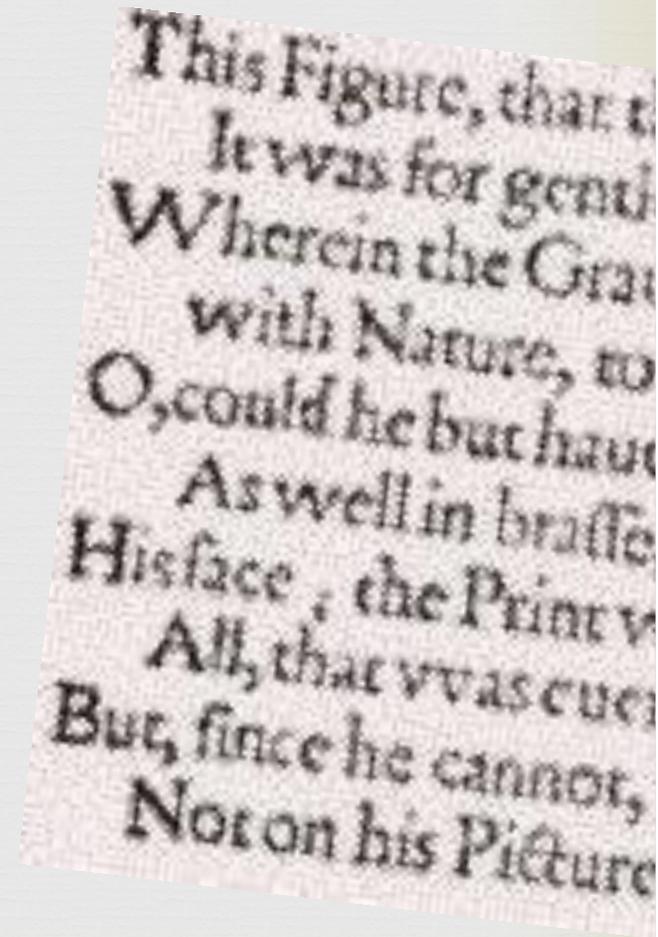
❖ The advent of the printing press in London in 1470 established the Chancery Standard dialect of English as the national standard.



# Early Modern English



❖ Modern readers of English are generally able to understand Early Modern English, though with some difficulties arising from changes in grammar, word meaning, and spelling.



This Figure, that t  
It was for gentl  
Wherein the Gra  
with Nature, to  
O, could he but hau  
As well in brasse  
His face; the Print v  
All, that vvas eue  
But, since he cannot,  
Not on his Picture

# Early Modern English



❖ English spelling was finally (mostly) standardized in this time period, but it did not happen overnight.



❖ Unfortunately, since this era was filled with political and social upheaval, mass migrations after the Black Death ...

# Early Modern English



... and an exaggerated attempt to further distinguish the "English accent" from that of the French, many peculiarities (i.e. contradictions) in English spelling and pronunciation were standardized into record at this time.

# Queen Elizabeth's Reign



- ❧ Closing off the era of the Tudors, Elizabeth was crowned queen in 1558.
- ❧ Her reign is considered the start of the golden age of English history typified by national pride, classical ideals, international expansion, military might, and a much-welcomed renaissance of the arts.



# Queen Elizabeth's Reign



- ❧ In this peaceful era, the arts flourished and culture bloomed.
- ❧ Significant writers of this time include William Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, Sir Philip Sidney, and Edmund Spenser.

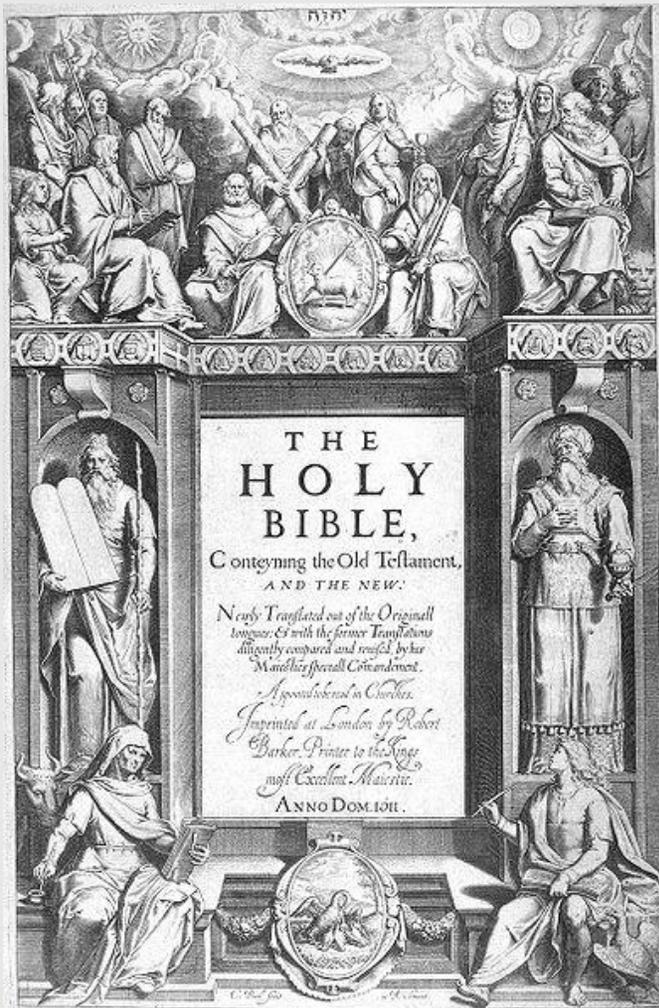


# King James



- Under King James, the golden age of Elizabethan literature and drama continued.
- The Authorised King James Version of the Bible (1611) and Shakespeare's collected works (published posthumously in 1623) are the best examples of the English language from this era and remain the top 2 bestsellers to this day.

# King James



- ✧ The translators of the King James Version of the Bible intentionally preserved archaic pronouns and verb endings that had already begun to fall out of spoken use.
- ✧ This enabled the English translators to convey the distinction between the 1st, 2nd and 3rd person singular and plural verb forms of the original Hebrew and Greek sources.

e.g. **2<sup>nd</sup> Person (You)**



∞ informal singular:

**thou, thee, thy, thine**

∞ plural / formal singular :

**you, ye, your, yours**



# *Early Modern English Pronouns*

Case		1st	2nd	3 <sup>rd</sup> M	3 <sup>rd</sup> F	3 <sup>rd</sup> N
S I N G	N	I	<b>thou</b>	he, a	she	it, hit
	A	me	<b>thee</b>	him	her	it, hit
	G	my/mine	<b>thy/thine</b>	his	her, hers	his, it, its
P L U R	N	we	<b>ye/you</b>	they		
	A	us	<b>you/ye</b>	them, (h)em		
	G	our, ours	<b>your, yours</b>	their, theirs		

# Common Themes of Elizabethan Drama



- ∞ Revenge
- ∞ Sensationalism
- ∞ Melodrama
- ∞ the Human Condition

# William Shakespeare



- ✧ ... stands out in this period as a poet and playwright as yet unsurpassed due to sheer giftedness and versatility.
- ✧ Though most of his plays met with great success, it is in his later years that he wrote what have been considered his greatest works: Romeo and Juliet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, The Tempest, and of course Hamlet.

# William Shakespeare



MEET BILL



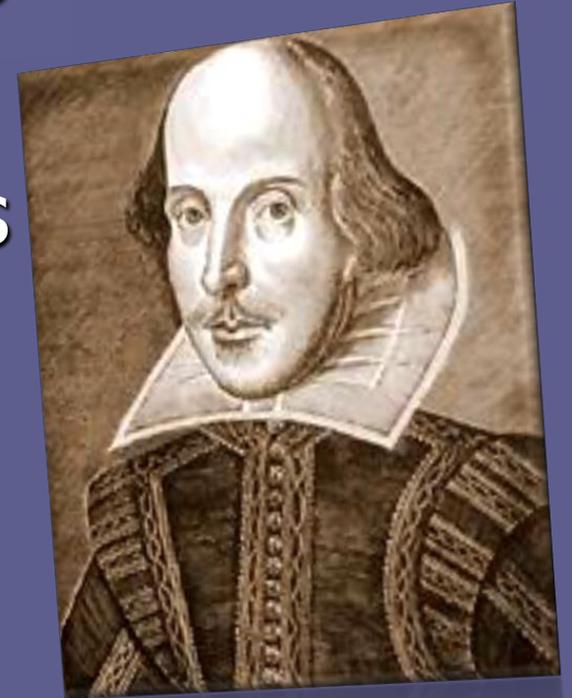
# William Shakespeare



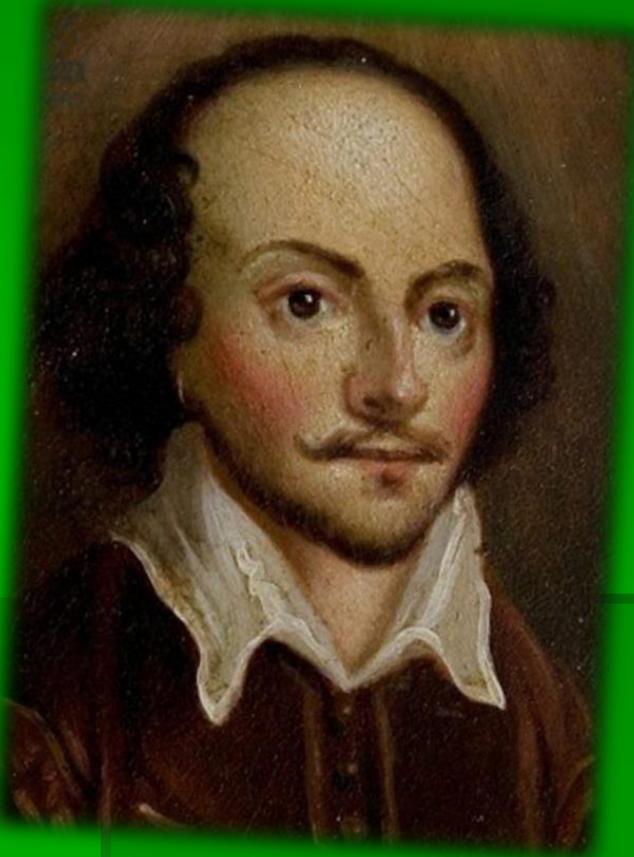
- He was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford, a town about 100 miles northwest of London.
- Shakespeare's father was a glove-maker, and Shakespeare received no higher than grammar school in his formal education.

# William Shakespeare

- At the age of 18 (in 1582), he married Anne Hathaway. She was eight years older than him.
- He left his family behind in 1590 and moved to London.
- By 1592, Shakespeare had become an actor and a playwright, and he was an immediate success with his "Lord Chamberlain's Men".



# William Shakespeare



- Shakespeare soon became the most popular playwright of the day as well as a part-owner of the Globe Theater.
- His theater troupe was adopted by King James as “The King's Men” in 1603.

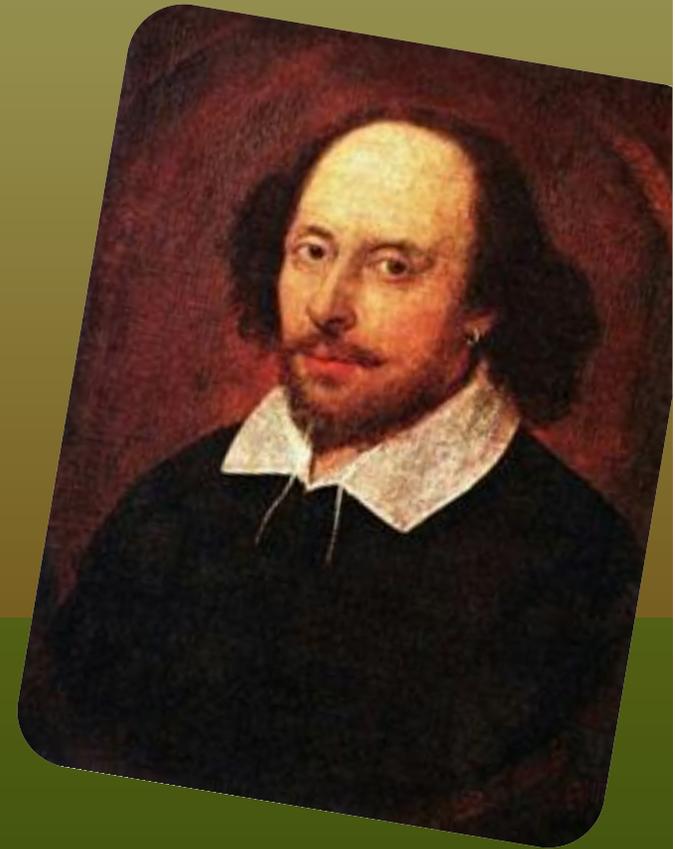
# William Shakespeare

- Shakespeare retired as a rich and prominent man of Stratford-upon-Avon in 1613.



# William Shakespeare

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



THE  
COMPANY



# William Shakespeare

- In 1603, the “Lord Chamberlain’s Men” became the “**King’s Men**”.
- This was due to the sponsorship of the king ... **King James**.

# 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 Macbeth:

*“So foul and fair a day I have not seen.”*

# 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**.

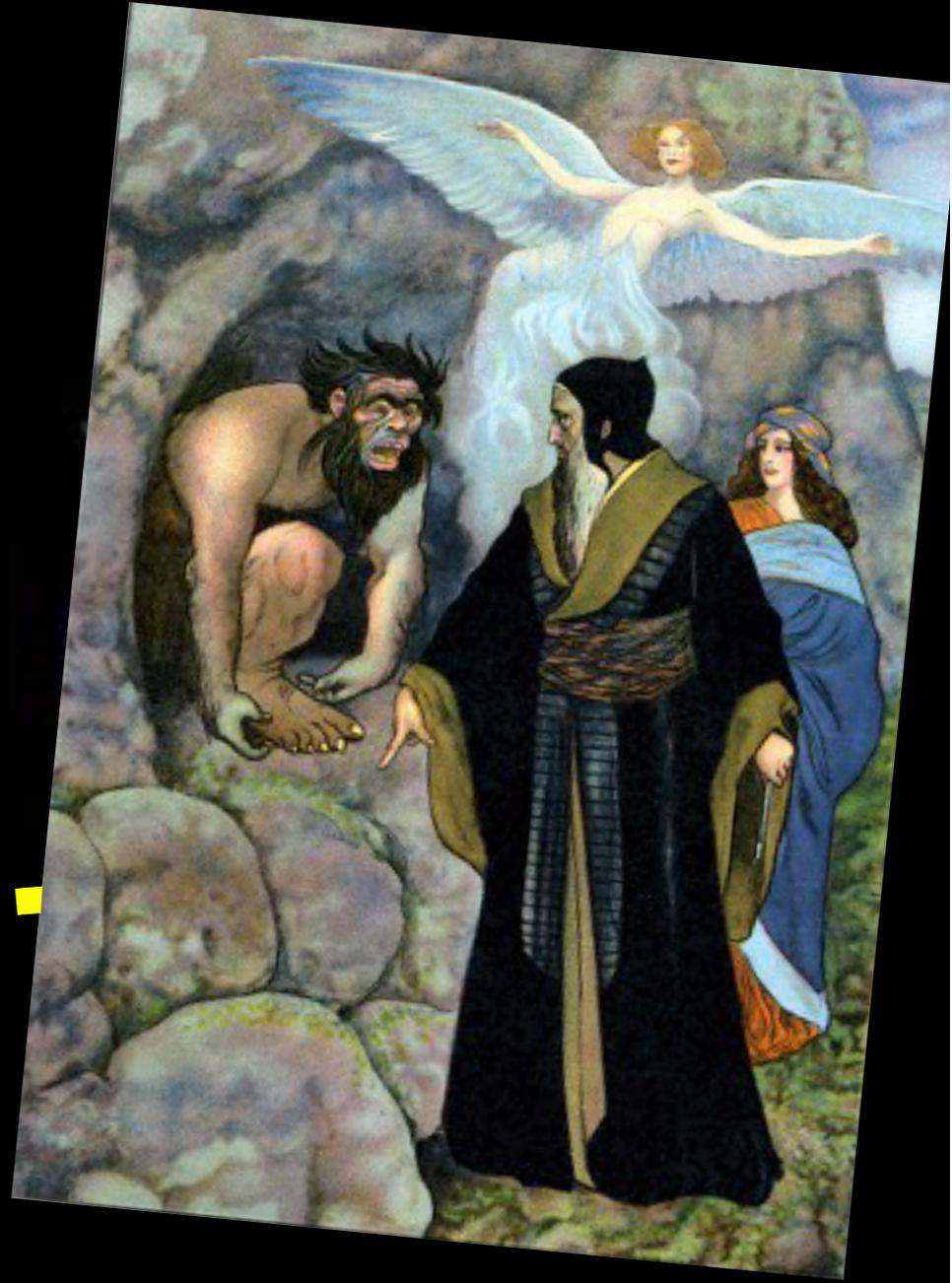
# Shakes' Plays ...

➤ 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  
Tempest



## **BASIC INFO - THE TEMPEST**

A wronged ruler strands his former enemies on a remote island through magic, tests them, restores order through, and returns to reclaim his position as his daughter's future is secured.

## **BASIC INFO - THE TEMPEST**

A displaced ruler with a taste for control turns an island into his personal command center — using “knowledge,” spectacle, and managed fear to keep its inhabitants in line — then stages a storm-born reckoning that restores his status and calls it mercy, even as everyone else is left living with the system he set up.

## **BASIC INFO - THE TEMPEST**

What begins like a classic revenge plot opens into something wider: an island-sized model of human society, crowded with rulers, servants, drunks, lovers, workers, and the conquered, all exposed under pressure. At the center is a man with both the power to punish and the chance to repair, and the play drives toward the question of which kind of ending he will choose.

# BASIC INFO - THE TEMPEST

★ **title:** *The Tempest*

■ **genre:** *comedy/fantasy*

■ **written:** early 1600s (often dated ~1610–1611)

■ **published:** 1623 (First Folio)

■ **where written:** England

■ **literary period:** Renaissance / early modern

★ **setting:** a remote island (kept vague on purpose)



# A GUIDING QUESTION

As we read, consider: Is Prospero restoring justice — or building a system where his control looks like ‘order’?

-   who controls land, labor, and information?
-  whose story becomes “official”?
-  who gets framed as “civil,” “monstrous,” or “grateful”?

# ELIZABETHAN TIMES



# ELIZABETHAN WORDS

-  **art** — are
-  **hath** — has
-  **prithee** — please / I beg you
-  **hither** — here / to this place
-  **hence** — away / from here
-  **ere** — before
-  **wherefore** — why



# Stage directions



**aside** — meant for audience  
(or one character) only



**within** — voice from  
offstage / inside



**invisible** — present but  
unseen by characters



**soft music / solemn music**  
— enchantment cue;  
control / mood shift



# Exigence: Why "Now"?

- England — especially King James — was obsessed with the "New World".
- In this play, Shakespeare turns an island into a pressure cooker for power.
- The play asks who rules, who serves, and what kind of future power chooses — or should choose.

# Things to look for while reading



- *LABELS*: monster, slave, civilized, natural, witch, noble, savage, obedient, traitor
- *CLAIMS of AUTHORITY*: who says they have the right to command, and why
- *ACTS of RHETORICAL FRAMING*: who tells the story first and gets believed
- *RESPONSES to DIFFERENCE*: fear, mockery, appropriation, pity, desire, possession
- *MOMENTS of SPECTACLE*: music, illusion, masque, theatrical surprise — and ask what those moments persuade characters to do or feel
- *CONTRADICTIONS*: especially when a character's behavior undercuts the identity they claim

# Things to look for while reading ...



## Miranda

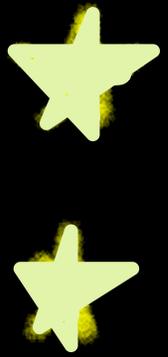
- innocence can function like "proof" that Prospero is good
- her compassion is real — but shaped by what she's allowed to know
- watch when she is encouraged to speak vs. gently redirected or managed



# Things to look for while reading



- **naming:** who gets labeled "monster," "slave," "witch," "civil"?
- **permission:** who asks, who orders, who bargains?
- **knowledge:** who knows the past, who is kept in the dark?
- **spectacle:** how do music, magic, and shows change people's choices?



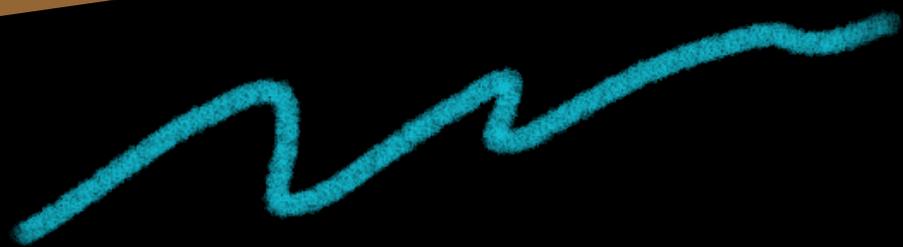
## Caliban

- often framed through labels like monster or slave (language doing harm)
- pushed into the role of "threat" — which can reveal colonizer fear more than truth
- also given moments of startling beauty (especially about the island's sounds) that complicate the stereotype



# Ariel

- powerful, intelligent, everywhere —
- but still tasked and timed
- freedom becomes a bargaining chip:  
"soon" is a tool of control
- invisibility + music + speed = how power  
can rule without being seen



# Symbols

-  **the storm** — controlled chaos; excuse to rearrange power
-  **the island** — home / resource / prison / stage
-  **books** — knowledge as weapon; control through learning
-  **sleep / waking** — control through consciousness and attention

# What's a comedy?



**comedy:** ends in repair (reunion, restoration, marriage/community)



**tragedy:** ends in collapse (death, ruin, irreversible loss)

**Tempest question:** if it "repairs," who pays the cost of that repair?



# *thematic motifs*

---

- power** — when someone controls your options, are you free?
  - freedom** — what counts: escape, choice, dignity, or all three?
  - language** — who gets to name reality, and who gets named?
  - control** — when does “order” become domination?
  - justice** — is revenge justice, or pain wearing authority?
  - forgiveness** — who is expected to forgive, and why?
- 



# *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.



# 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 this:

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

