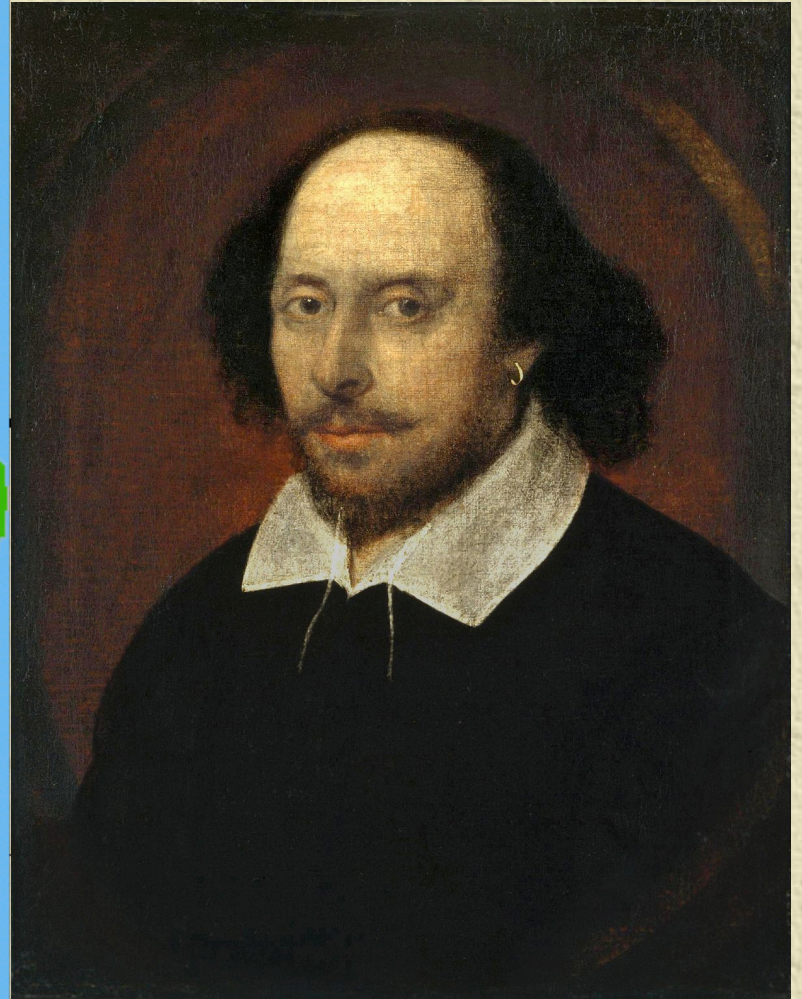


Shakespeare

Born 1564 in Stratford upon Avon, England...April 23rd



Introduction

- ✦ Throughout the middle ages plays were performed by workers in towns and were religious based, often retelling stories from the Bible.

Elizabethan writers introduced theatre audiences to horror, the supernatural and **GORE...**

Globe audience faints at 'grotesquely violent' Titus Andronicus

Five faint after seeing the 'grotesquely violent' Titus Andronicus at Shakespeare's Globe, as theatre-goers warn of feeling sick and sleepless nights

You kill'd her husband, and for that vile fault
Two of her brothers were condemn'd to death,
My hand cut off and made a merry jest;
Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear
Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity,

...

This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,
Whilst that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold
The basin that receives your guilty blood.

Titus Andronicus (V.ii.176-87)

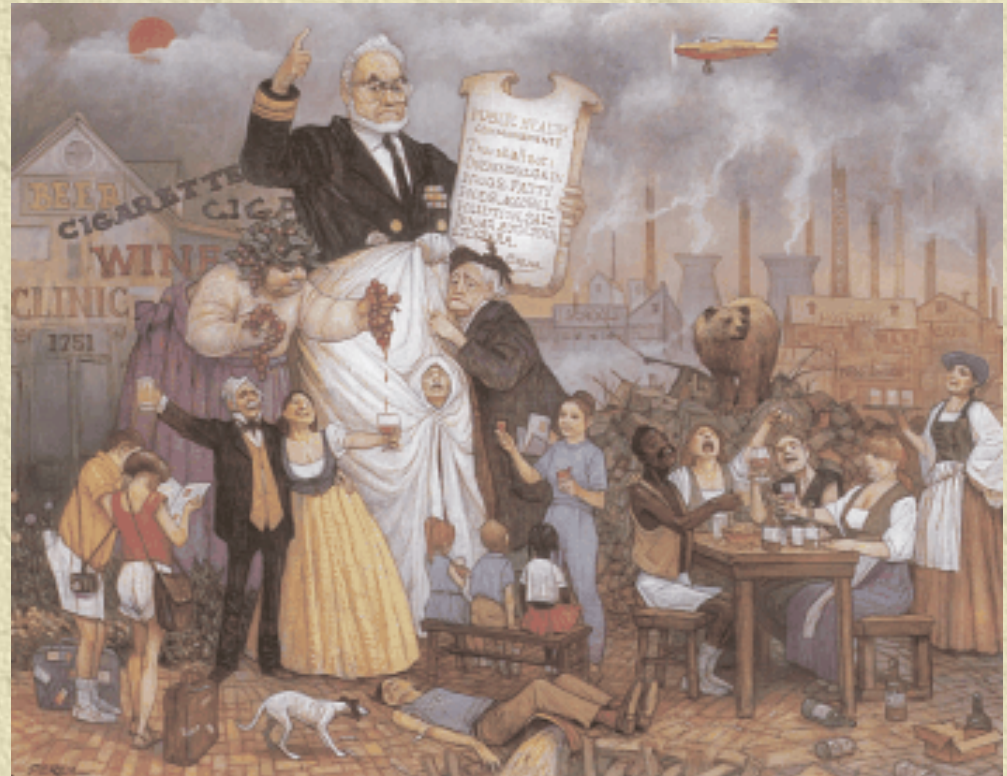
Elizabethan Playwrights

The most well known playwright of Elizabethan times is Shakespeare. But there were also other writers (Christopher Marlowe) who in their time were just as, or even more famous, than the Bard.



Theater Career

- Member and later part-owner of the Lord Chamberlain's Men
- Theaters in London closed from 1593-1594 due to the plague



Theater Career

- After the accession of James I in 1603, the company was granted permission to change its name to the King's Men
London theatres: Blackfriars, Rose, Swan, Curtain, Globe
- Wrote during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth (Elizabethan period) and King James I (Jacobean period)



Queen Elizabeth

The Globe Theatre

- Globe built in 1599 by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, with Shakespeare as a primary investor
- Burned down in 1613 during a production of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* when a cannon misfired and a spark landed on the thatched roof

The Rebuilt Globe Theater, London



The Globe Theater



The Plays

- ✦ plays firmly attributed to Shakespeare
 - COMEDIES – Happy endings
 - ♦ *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night, As You Like It, Much Ado about Nothing*
 - HISTORIES – Plays based around (often embellished) English monarchs.
 - ♦ *Richard III, Henry IV, Henry V*
 - TRAGEDIES – Tragic endings often involving death.
 - ♦ *Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello*

The Poetry

- Two major poems
 - *Venus and Adonis*
 - *Rape of Lucrece*
- 154 Sonnets
- Numerous other poems
- Poetry usually dedicated to a patron

Shakespeare's Language

- Shakespeare did NOT write in “Old English”
- Old English is the language of *Beowulf*:
Hwaet! We Gardena in geardagum
Ʒeodcýninga Ʒrym gefrunon
Hu ða æƷelingas ellen fremedon!

Hey! We have heard of the glory of the Spear-Danes in the old days, the kings of tribes, how noble princes showed great courage!

Shakespeare's Language

- Shakespeare did not write in “Middle English”

- Middle English is the language of Chaucer, the *Gawain*-poet, and Malory:

We redeth oft and findeth y-write—

And this clerkes wele it wite—

Layes that ben in harping

Ben y-founde of ferli thing... (*Sir Orfeo*)

Shakespeare's Language

- Shakespeare wrote in “Early Modern English”
- EME was not very different from “Modern English,” except that it had some old holdovers.
- Beginning about 200 years before Shakespeare, and largely complete by his day, long vowel pronunciation shifted: ex: good, name, life

Shakespeare's Language

• Shakespeare coined many words we still use today:

- Critical
- Majestic
- Dwindle

And quite a few phrases as well:

- One fell swoop
- Flesh and blood
- Vanish into thin air

How to Read the Plays

- Do not pause at the end of a line unless the punctuation calls for it
- Read it like prose
- Many of these plays have numerous references to people, places, events, myths, etc., that you might not be familiar with. That's what the notes are for—use them.
- Keep a dictionary handy

Verse vs. Prose

Verse: Often in iambic pentameter. Always written with a specific meter that will sometimes have small variations in it to cue the audience in on the state of the characters.

Prose: Written like a novel. There is no meter and reads just like a ‘normal’ sentence. Pay attention to when Shakespeare switches from verse to prose or vice versa! Often, it provides critical insight into the character.

An example of irregularity

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Macbeth (IV.i.10-1)

This famous couplet from *Macbeth* is not in iambic pentameter. Instead, it is written in trochaic tetrameter.

The Performances



- ✦ The theatres often had mechanisms that allowed “angels” and “gods” to be lowered down onto the stage. Stages were also equipped with a trapdoor leading to a “Hell” beneath the stage. The trapdoor was also used as a grave in theatrical funerals.
- ✦ There was very little scenery available for theatres, so the writers often used to dialogue to explain to the audience where the scene was taking place.
- ✦ Costume was very important in Elizabethan theatre. Actors wore colourful and elaborate costumes that would tell the audience the characters status, family ties or profession.
- ✦ The emphasis that was given to a character’s clothing made the theme of disguise a common convention of Elizabethan theatre. In order to exchange places with another character or conceal his identity, all an actor needed to do was to change his costume.
- ✦ The Elizabethan theatre also used a variety of sound effects. Music played an important role in the setting the mood of the plays. Other sounds created were thunder, running horses, falling rain, and cannon blasts.

Shakespeare Today

- ✦ Elizabethan theatre is still plays a part in our day to day lives, mostly through the influence of Shakespeare. You can find references to his work in films, novels, plays, musicals, songs, poetry, artwork, satire...Even today his characters and storylines continue to inspire...



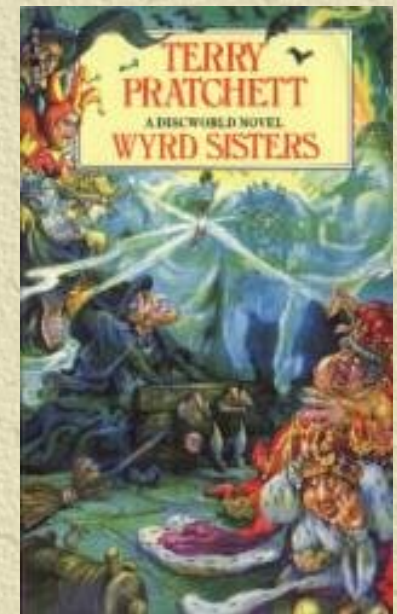
Othello



Romeo and Juliet



The Taming of the Shrew



Various!

Shakespeare in Language

Elizabethan theatre has had a very important effect on today's theatre, and other parts of every day life. For example:

- ✦ Shakespeare coined over 1600 words still used today including **countless, critical, excellent, lonely, majestic, obscene** and **its**.
- ✦ Names coined by Shakespeare:
 - **Imogen** in the play *Cymbaline*,
 - **Jessica** in the play *The Merchant of Venice*
 - **Miranda** in the play *The Tempest*
 - **Olivia** in the play *Twelfth Night*
 - **Cordelia** in the play *King Lear*

And lastly...

“If you cannot understand my argument, and declare **"It's Greek to me"**, if your lost property has **vanished into thin air**, if you have ever refused to **budge an inch** or suffered from **green-eyed jealousy**, if you have **played fast and loose**, if you have been **tongue-tied**, **hoodwinked** or **in a pickle**, if you have **knitted your brows**, insisted on **fair play**, **slept not one wink**, **laughed yourself into stitches**, if you have **too much of a good thing**, if you have **seen better days** or if you think it is **high time** and that that is **the long and short of it**, if you believe that **the game is up** and that **truth will out** even if it involves **your own flesh and blood**, if you **lie low** till the **crack of doom** because you suspect **foul play**, if you have your **teeth set on edge (at one fell swoop)** **without rhyme or reason** - it is all one to me, for you are quoting Shakespeare!”

The End

Died April 23, 1616 – 52 Years Old

* Actor



* Poet

* Playwright