

On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2016 we commemorate 400 years since William Shakespeare's death. Why is he still so popular? Maybe that's because his plays and sonnets transcend time and culture and they suit our modern world. Or is it due to the complexity of his characters? Discover it for yourself. So, what are you waiting for? It is time to grab one of his plays and start reading!

# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



The greatest writer in the English language

## 1/ LIFE Shakespeare had an interesting life (and death):

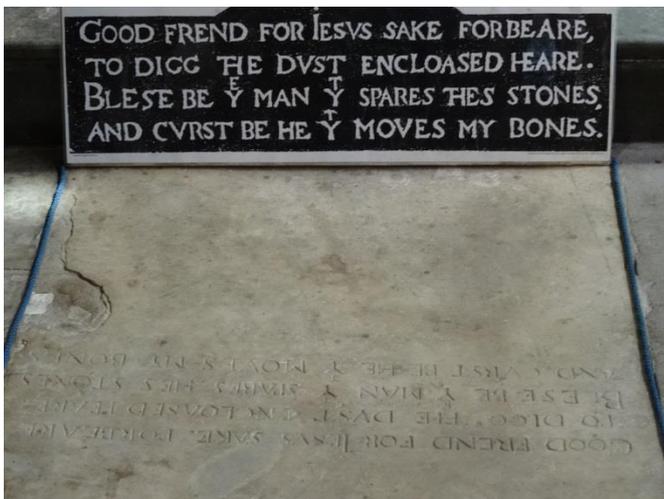
He was probably born on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1564, in Stratford-upon-Avon, and died on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1616 (under the old Julian calendar, May 3<sup>rd</sup> according to today's Gregorian calendar).

His father, John Shakespeare, was a successful glove maker. His mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a rich farmer. They had eight children.

Shakespeare married his wife Anne Hathaway when he was 18. She was 26. They had three children together – a son, Hamnet, who died in 1596, and two daughters, Susanna and Judith. Hamnet and Judith were twins. Shakespeare has no descendants. His only granddaughter Elizabeth, Susanna's daughter, died childless in 1670.

He moved to London where he became a famous playwright and actor. He lived there for 25 years.

Shakespeare was buried in the chancel of the Holy Trinity Church, in Stratford-upon-Avon. He wrote a curse for his grave, because it was customary to dig up the bones from previous graves to make room for others. His epitaph was: *"Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear/To dig the dust enclosed here:/Blest be the man that spares these stones,/And curst be he that moves my bones."*



2/CAREER: Shakespeare was a famous poet, playwright, actor and part-owner of a playing company, Lord Chamberlain's Men. (later the King's Men) They built their own theatre on the south bank of the River Thames, the Globe Theatre. In 1608, Shakespeare and his partners also took over the Blackfriars indoor theatre. He became a wealthy business man.



MODERN RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GLOBE THEATRE IN LONDON

2-1/ He wrote 38 plays:

1589	Comedy of Errors		Henry IV, Part II
1590	Henry VI, Part II	1598	Henry V
	Henry VI, Part III		Much Ado about Nothing
1591	Henry VI, Part I	1599	Twelfth Night
1592	Richard III		As You Like It
1593	The Taming of the Shrew		Julius Caesar
	Titus Andronicus	1600	Hamlet
1594	Romeo and Juliet		Merry Wives of Windsor
	Two Gentlemen of Verona	1601	Troilus and Cressida
	Love's Labour's Lost	1602	All's Well That Ends Well
1595	Richard II	1604	Othello
	Midsummer Night's Dream		Measure for Measure
1596	King John	1605	King Lear
	Merchant of Venice		Macbeth
1597	Henry IV, Part I	1606	Antony and Cleopatra
1607	Coriolanus	1611	The Tempest
	Timon of Athens	1612	Henry VIII
1608	Pericles		
1609	Cymbeline	1613	The Two Noble Kingsmen
1610	A Winter's Tale	.	

2-2/- He wrote 154 sonnets and some narrative poems.

2-3/Shakespeare invented more than 1,700 words:

accommodation	control (noun)	gloomy	misplaced
aerial	countless	hurry	multitudinous
amazement	courtship	impartial	road
apostrophe	dislocate	invulnerable	submerge
assassination	exposure	lapse	suspicious
bloody	generous	lonely	

2-4/Shakespeare invented new expressions:

all that glitters isn't gold  
as dead as a doornail  
break the ice  
brevity is the soul of wit  
catch a cold  
clothes make the man  
fair play  
give the devil his due

green eyed monster  
fashionable  
heart of gold  
housekeeping  
it smells to heaven  
it's Greek to me  
naked truth  
neither a borrower nor a lender be

2-5/ Some quotes from his plays are very famous:

"To be, or not to be: that is the question". - (Hamlet Act III, Scene I).

"All the world 's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts" - (*As You Like It* Act II, Scene VII).

"True is it that we have seen better days". - (*As You Like It* Act II, Scene VII).

"The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool". - (*As You Like It* Act V, Scene I).

"A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!". - (*King Richard III* Act V, Scene IV).

"Off with his head!" - (*King Richard III* Act III, Scene IV).

"O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?". - (*Romeo and Juliet* Act II, Scene II).

"It is the east, and Juliet is the sun" . - (*Romeo and Juliet* Act II, Scene II).

"But love is blind, and lovers cannot see". *The Merchant of Venice*

"If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?". - (*The Merchant of Venice* Act III, Scene I).

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him". - (*Julius Caesar* Act III, Scene II).

"But, for my own part, it was Greek to me". - (*Julius Caesar* Act I, Scene II).

"A dish fit for the gods". - (*Julius Caesar* Act II, Scene I).

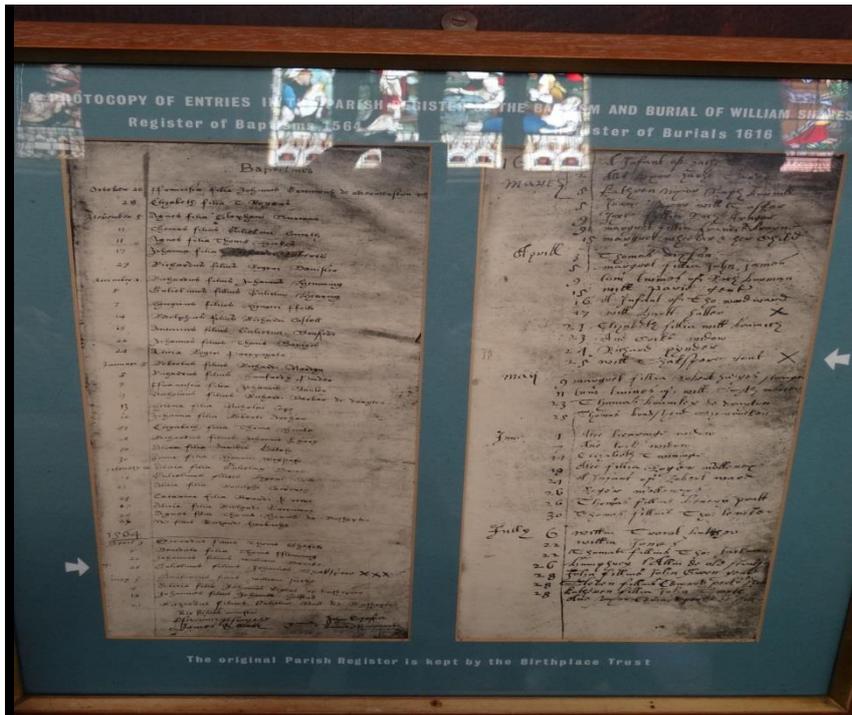
"Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more". - (*Julius Caesar* Act III, Scene II).

"Beware the ides of March". - (*Julius Caesar* Act I, Scene II).

"Cowards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste of death but once.  
(*Julius Caesar* Act II, Scene II).

"What 's done is done".- (*Macbeth* Act III, Scene II).

"The common curse of mankind, - folly and ignorance". - (*Troilus and Cressida* Act II, Scene III).



ENTRIES IN THE PARISH REGISTER OF THE BAPTISM AND BURIAL OF SHAKESPEARE

### 3/ THE SHAKESPEARE AUTHORSHIP QUESTION

From the 19th century many scholars have claimed that Shakespeare was the front-man for another writer. He had very little education, he never travelled outside England and he was not familiar with the high politics of the royal Court or with the customs of other countries such as Italy or France.

In his six surviving signatures William Shakespeare did not spell his name as it appears on most Shakespeare plays and the different spellings and handwriting show that he was barely literate. As more evidence comes to light, some consider that the name of Shakespeare could have been used as a pseudonym. There are more than 80 possible authors, such as:

- Sir Henry Neville, a politician and diplomat. Some of his ancestors are characters from the plays : The Earl of Warwick ( in Henry VI), John of Gaunt (Richard II). He could speak French but Shakespeare didn't and one scene of Henry V is in French. He visited Italy in 1574 and Vienna in 1580. He may have concealed his authorship because his family belonged to the Plantagenet royal line, rivals to the ruling Tudors.

- Sir Christopher Marlowe, a playwright. He had faked his own death and he may have used this pseudonym.

Sir Francis Bacon: a lawyer, philosopher, essayist and scientist.

William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby. He was a theatre enthusiast and had his own theatre company.

Further info:

<http://www.folger.edu/shakespeares-life>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/400-years-after-shakespeare-lives>

<http://www.biography.com/people/william-shakespeare-9480323>

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/fun-international-facts-about-shakespeare>

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Shakespeare](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare)

[http://www.stratford-upon-avon.co.uk/static\\_478.htm](http://www.stratford-upon-avon.co.uk/static_478.htm)

[http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/04/14/babelia/1460640879\\_175928.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/04/14/babelia/1460640879_175928.html)

<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/biography/wordsinvented.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakespeare\\_authorship\\_question](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakespeare_authorship_question)