

Shakespeare Shorts

Readers' Theater Series

Grades 2-4

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Illustrated by David McAleese

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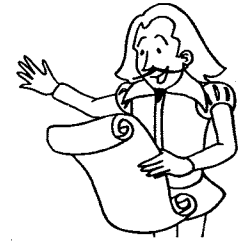


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All About William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is famous for the poems and plays that he wrote. We remember him today, more than 440 years after he was born!

William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564, in the town of Stratford-Upon-Avon, in England. His wife's name was Anne Hathaway, and he had three children named Susanna, Judith, and Hamnet. Unfortunately, Hamnet died when he was only eleven years old.



One day, Shakespeare moved to London, England, and began to write plays. His family remained in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Some of his plays were about famous people from history, some were about war, some were about romance, and some were comedies. He often acted in his own plays!

In Shakespeare's time, actors wore interesting costumes, a few wore masks, and they used some props, like guns or swords. If you were an actor working with Shakespeare, you might have been a king, a soldier, a witch, a fairy, or a ghost. Only men and boys could be in the plays, because people in Shakespeare's day thought it was rude for a woman or a girl to be in a play. Since girls were not allowed, boys got to play the parts of the ladies!

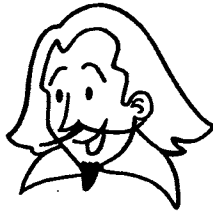
One of the theaters Shakespeare worked in was called The Globe. It could hold 3,000 people, and was a theater without a roof! Rich people sat on benches in a covered area, but most people stood on the floor and watched the plays. The people who stood were called groundlings, and if it rained, they got wet!

Shakespeare returned to Stratford-Upon-Avon when he was much older, after a fire burned The Globe Theatre to the ground. He died when he was 52, on his birthday, April 23, in 1616. When he died, he was very famous.

We remember him today because he wrote plays that continue to mean a lot to us. Plays like *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are still performed everywhere, because people like to hear the ideas and words that Shakespeare wrote, and because he told stories about the feelings that people have always had.

Illustrated Vocabulary

William Shakespeare



Stratford-Upon-Avon

London

England

Anne Hathaway



Susanna



Judith



Hamnet



Queen Elizabeth I



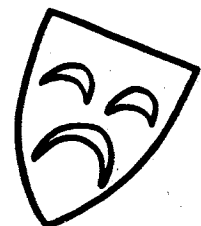
plays

poetry

comedy



tragedy



Illustrated Vocabulary

actor



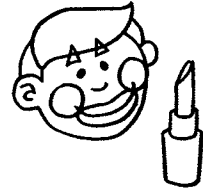
actress



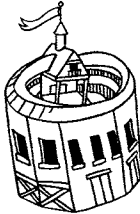
costume



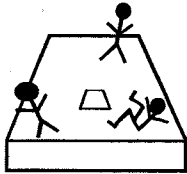
make-up



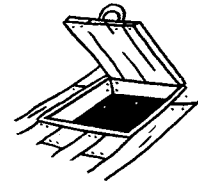
The Globe Theatre



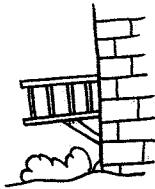
stage



trapdoor

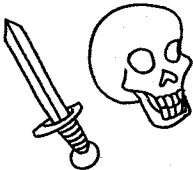


balcony



performance

props



script



audience



groundling



The Globe Theatre

