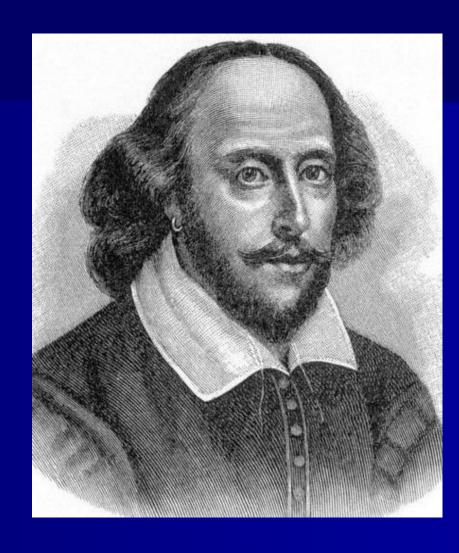
William Shakespeare

1564 - 1616

William Shakespeare, the greatest and the most famous of English writers, and probably the greatest playwright who has ever lived, was born on the 23d of April, 1564, in Stratford-on-Avon. It was a small English town. His father wanted his son an educated person and William was sent to the local Grammar School, he had now free time. When he had a break William liked to go to the forest and to the river Avon.



When Shakespeare was twenty-one, he went to London. He became an actor and a member of a very successful acting company. He began to write plays too. In his works Shakespeare described the most important and dramatic events in life. His plays were staged in many theatres, translated into many languages and they made Shakespeare a very popular man.



Most of Shakespeare's plays were not published in his lifetime. So some of them may have been lost in the fire when the Globe burnt down in 1613. Most of his plays were performed in the new Globe Theater built on the bank of the River Themes.



Shakespeare's Globe was rather different from modern theatres. The plays were performed in the open air and the audience got wet if it rained. There was no scenery, very few props, and the only lighting was the daylight that came from the open roof above. Women in those days weren't allowed to act in public and all the parts (even Juliet!) were played by men. Much of the audience stood to watch the performance and moved around, talking with each other and throwing fruit at the stage if they didn't like something.

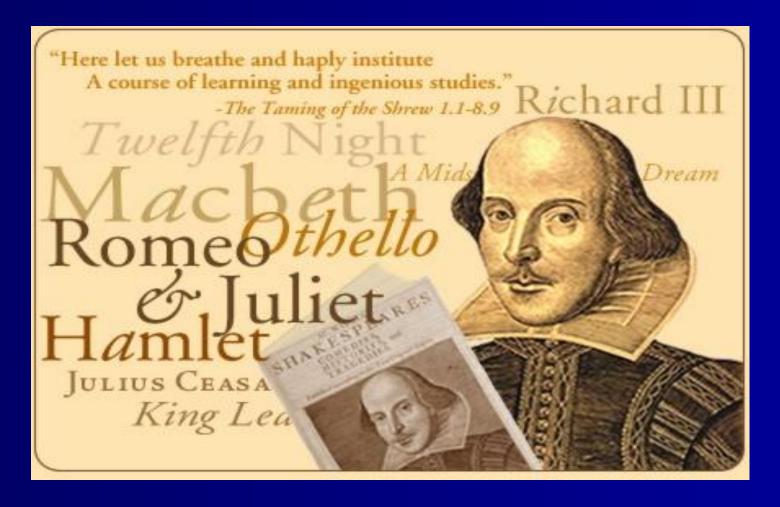


In 1997, Shakespeare's Globe was restored.

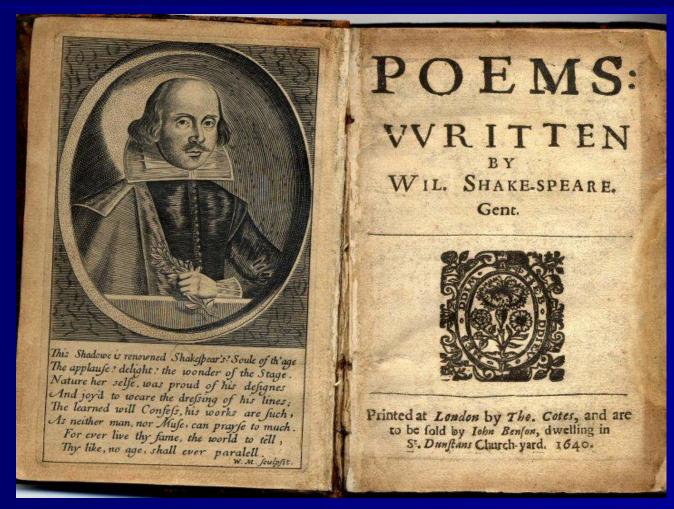




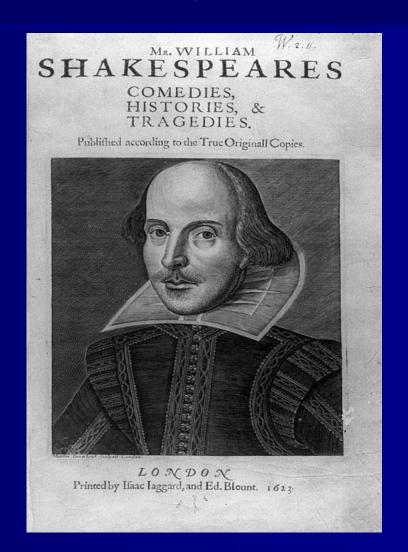
Shakespeare wrote 37 plays: 10 tragedies (such as Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet), 17 comedies (such as As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing), 10 historical plays (such as Henry IV, Richard III.).



He also left 7 books of poems. His 154 sonnets are known all over the world nowadays.



We don't know a lot of facts about Shakespeare's. We can only guess what kind of man he was, that's why there are many legends about his life.



Shakespeare spent the last years of his life at Stratford, where he died, ironically, on the same date as his birthday, the 23d of April, 1616. He was buried in the church of Stratford. A monument was erected to the memory of the great playwright in the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.

