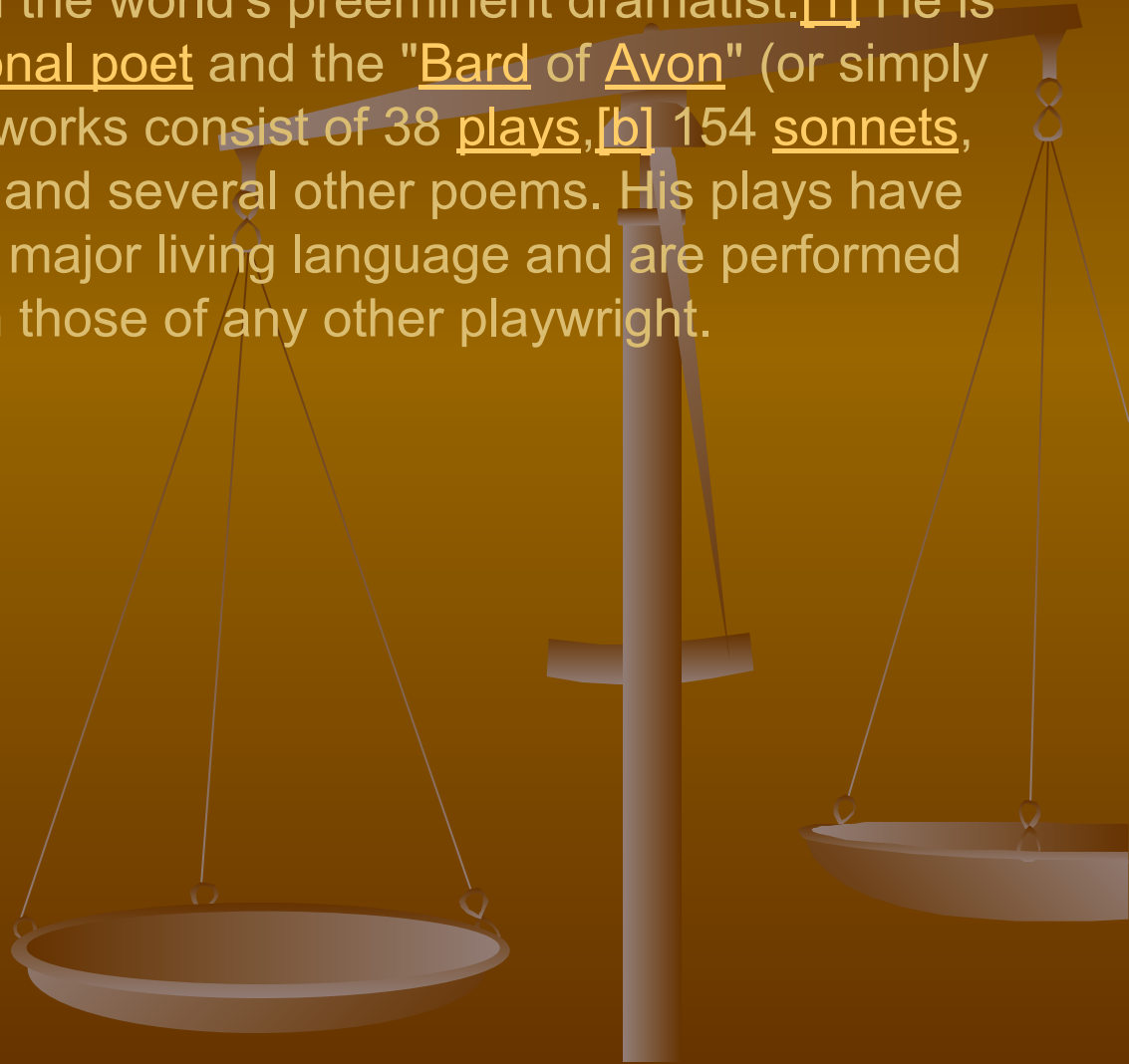






**William Shakespeare (baptised 26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) was an**

**an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's preeminent dramatist.[1] He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" (or simply "The Bard"). His surviving works consist of 38 plays,[b] 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several other poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.**



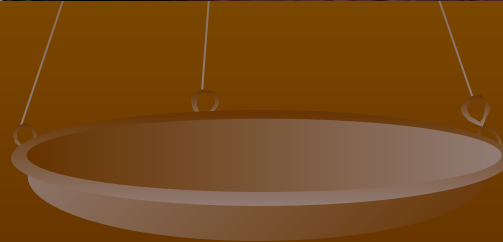



## Early life

William Shakespeare was the son of John Shakespeare, a successful glover and alderman originally from Snitterfield and Mary Arden, the daughter of an affluent landowning farmer. He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon and baptised on 26 April 1564. His unknown birthday is traditionally observed on 23 April, St George's Day. This date, which can be traced back to an eighteenth-century scholar's mistake, has proved appealing because Shakespeare died on 23 April 1616. He was the third child of eight and the eldest surviving son.

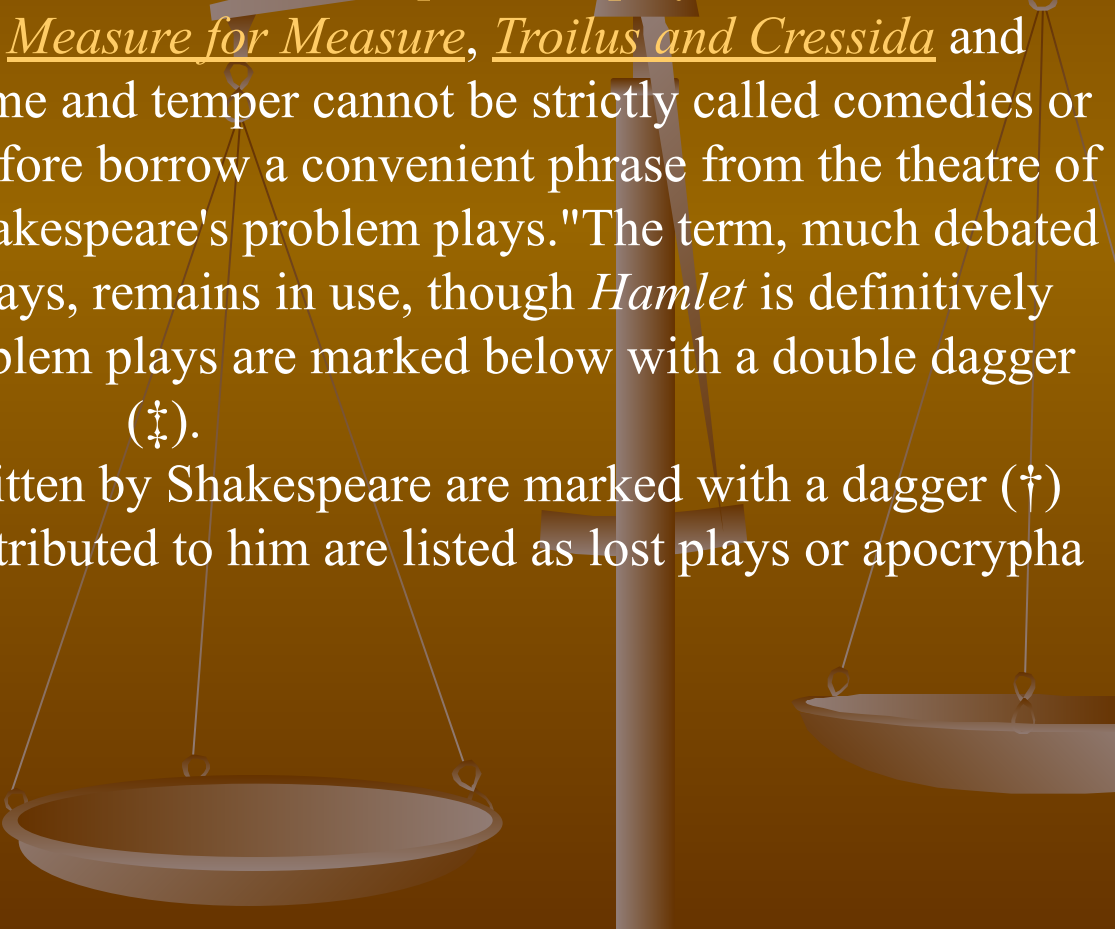
Although no attendance records for the period survive, most biographers agree that Shakespeare was educated at the King's New School in Stratford, a free school chartered in 1553, about a quarter of a mile from his home. Grammar schools varied in quality during the Elizabethan era, but the curriculum was dictated by law throughout England, and the school would have provided an intensive education in Latin grammar and the classics

# Classification of the plays





Shakespeare's works include the 36 plays printed in the First Folio of 1623, listed below according to their folio classification as comedies, histories and tragedies. Shakespeare did not write every word of the plays attributed to him; and several show signs of collaboration, a common practice at the time. Two plays not included in the First Folio, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, are now accepted as part of the canon, with scholars agreed that Shakespeare made a major contribution to their composition. No poems were included in the First Folio.



In the late nineteenth century, Edward Dowden classified four of the late comedies as romances, and though many scholars prefer to call them tragicomedies, his term is often used. These plays and the associated *Two Noble Kinsmen* are marked with an asterisk (\*) below. In 1896, Frederick S. Boas coined the term "problem plays" to describe four plays: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Hamlet*. "Dramas as singular in theme and temper cannot be strictly called comedies or tragedies", he wrote. "We may therefore borrow a convenient phrase from the theatre of today and class them together as Shakespeare's problem plays." The term, much debated and sometimes applied to other plays, remains in use, though *Hamlet* is definitively classed as a tragedy. The other problem plays are marked below with a double dagger (‡).

Plays thought to be only partly written by Shakespeare are marked with a dagger (†) below. Other works occasionally attributed to him are listed as lost plays or apocrypha

# Works



## Comedies

Main article: Shakespearean comedy

*All's Well That Ends Well*†

*As You Like It*

*The Comedy of Errors*

*Love's Labour's Lost*

*Measure for Measure*†

*The Merchant of Venice*

*The Merry Wives of Windsor*

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*Much Ado About Nothing*

*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*\*†[d]

*The Taming of the Shrew*

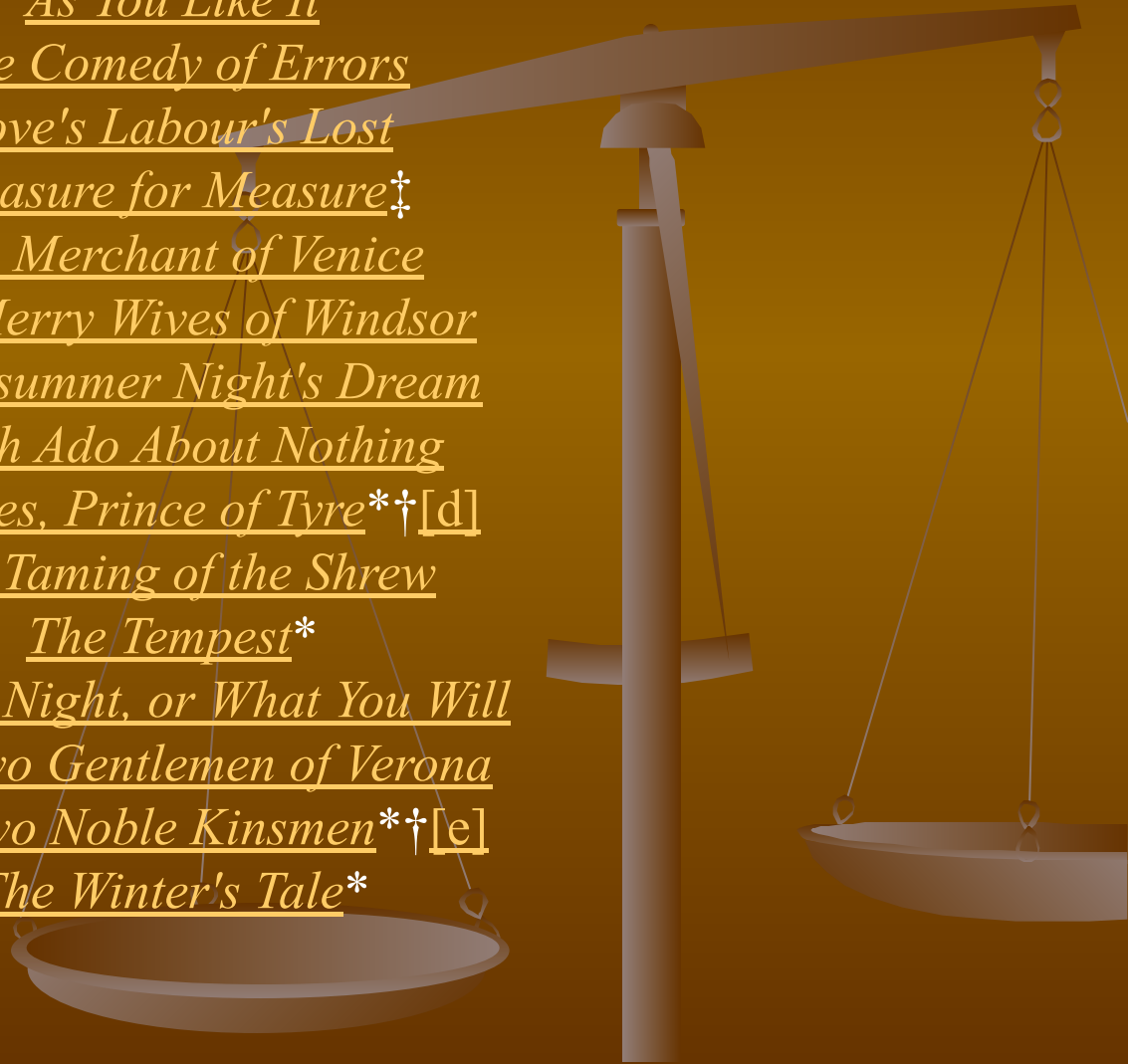
*The Tempest*\*

*Twelfth Night, or What You Will*

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

*The Two Noble Kinsmen*\*†[e]

*The Winter's Tale*\*



## Histories

Main article: [Shakespearean history](#)

*King John*

*Richard II*

*Henry IV, part 1*

*Henry IV, part 2*

*Henry V*

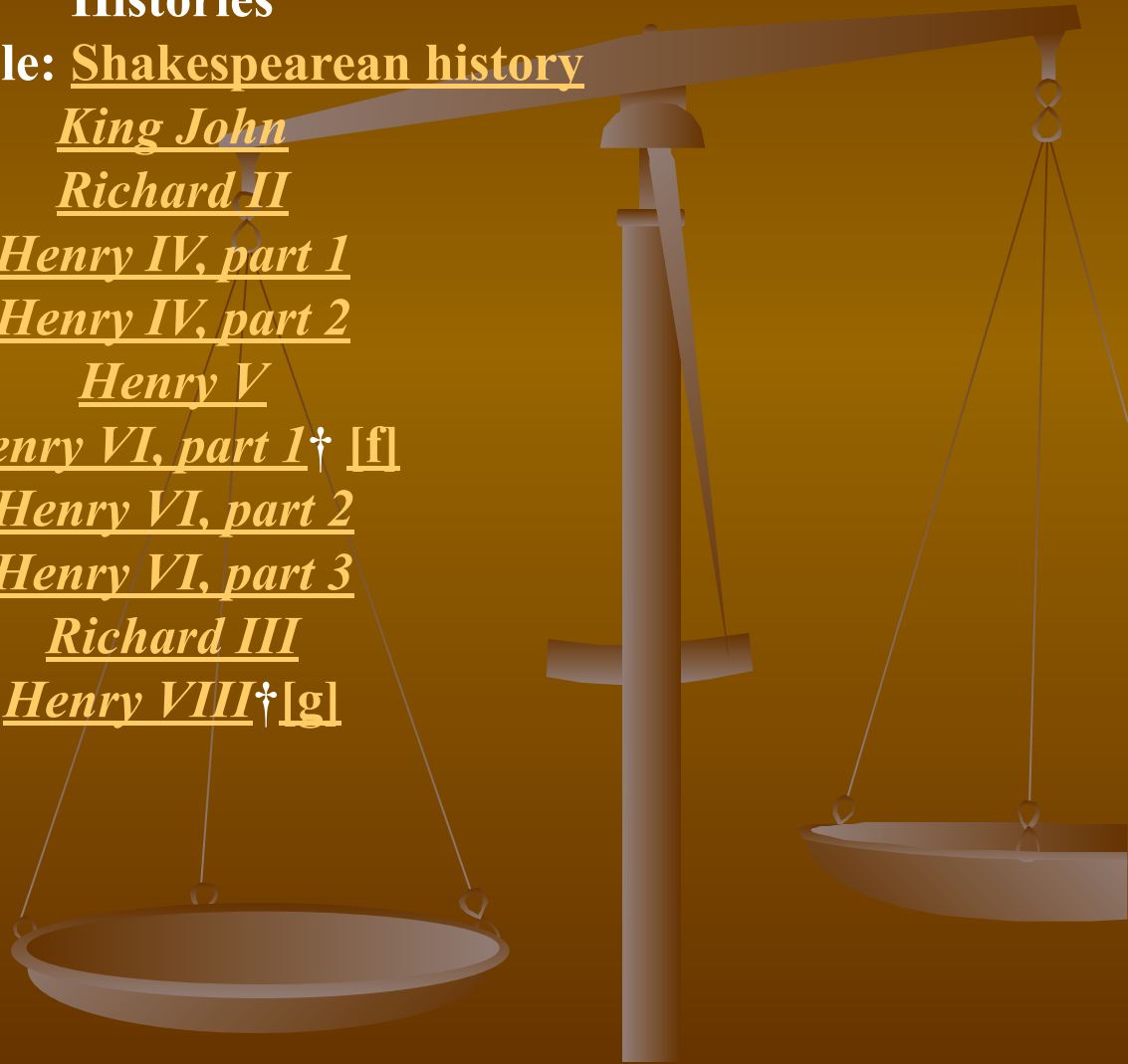
*Henry VI, part 1*† [f]

*Henry VI, part 2*

*Henry VI, part 3*

*Richard III*

*Henry VIII*† [g]



## Tragedies

Main article: Shakespearean tragedy

*Romeo and Juliet*

*Coriolanus*

*Titus Andronicus*† [h]

*Timon of Athens*† [i]

*Julius Caesar*

*Macbeth*† [i]

*Hamlet*

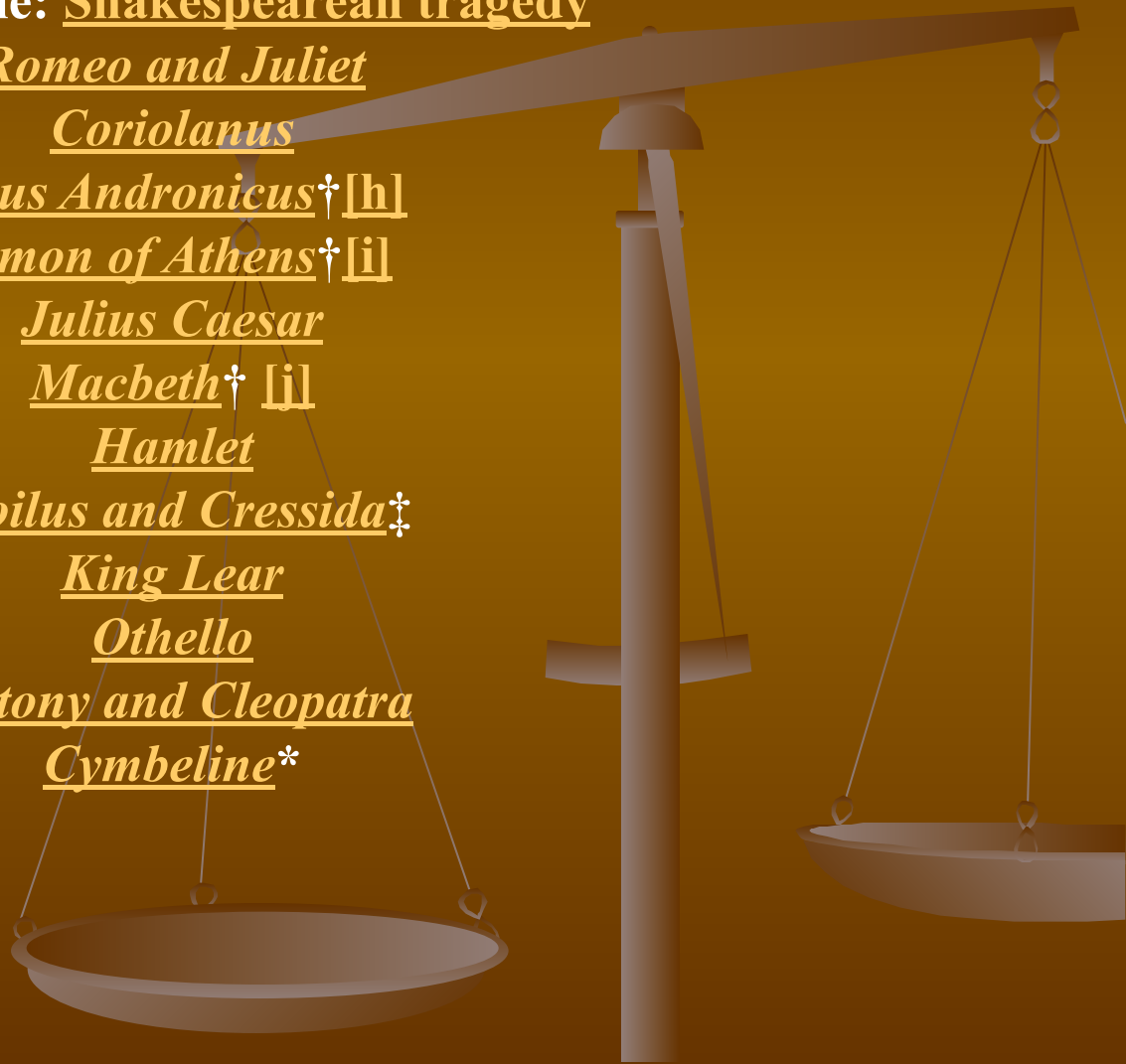
*Troilus and Cressida*†

*King Lear*

*Othello*

*Antony and Cleopatra*

*Cymbeline*\*



# Poems

*Shakespeare's Sonnets*

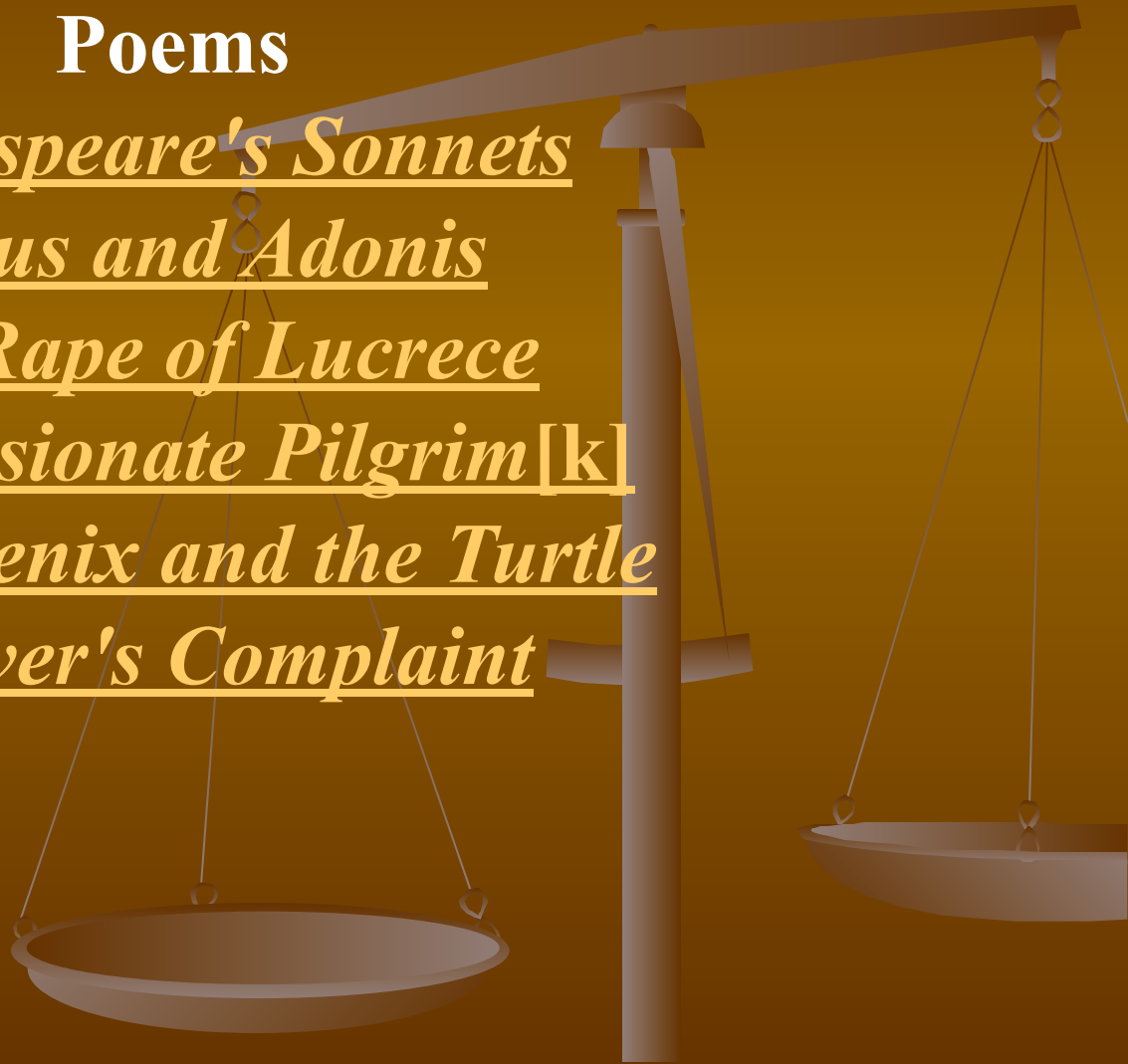
*Venus and Adonis*

*The Rape of Lucrece*

*The Passionate Pilgrim* [k]

*The Phoenix and the Turtle*

*A Lover's Complaint*





Lost plays  
*Love's Labour's Won*  
*Cardenio*

# Apocrypha

Main article: [Shakespeare Apocrypha](#)

[Arden of Faversham](#)

[The Birth of Merlin](#)

[Lochrine](#)

[The London Prodigal](#)

[The Puritan](#)

[The Second Maiden's Tragedy](#)

[Sir John Oldcastle](#)

[Thomas Lord Cromwell](#)

[A Yorkshire Tragedy](#)

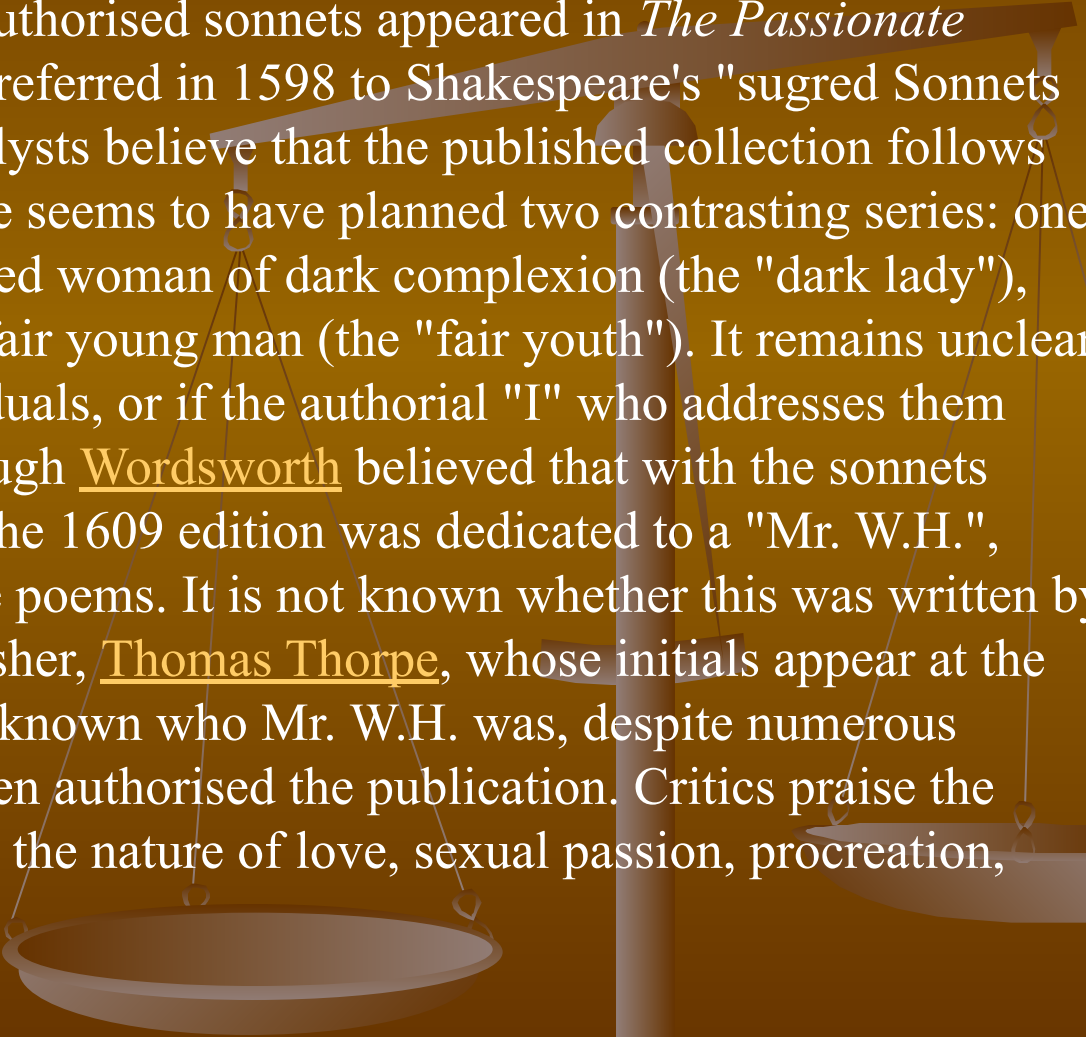
[Edward III](#)

[Sir Thomas More](#)



# Sonnets

Published in 1609, the Sonnets were the last of Shakespeare's non-dramatic works to be printed. Scholars are not certain when each of the 154 sonnets was composed, but evidence suggests that Shakespeare wrote sonnets throughout his career for a private readership. Even before the two unauthorised sonnets appeared in *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, Francis Meres had referred in 1598 to Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his private friends". Few analysts believe that the published collection follows Shakespeare's intended sequence. He seems to have planned two contrasting series: one about uncontrollable lust for a married woman of dark complexion (the "dark lady"), and one about conflicted love for a fair young man (the "fair youth"). It remains unclear if these figures represent real individuals, or if the authorial "I" who addresses them represents Shakespeare himself, though Wordsworth believed that with the sonnets "Shakespeare unlocked his heart". The 1609 edition was dedicated to a "Mr. W.H.", credited as "the only begetter" of the poems. It is not known whether this was written by Shakespeare himself or by the publisher, Thomas Thorpe, whose initials appear at the foot of the dedication page; nor is it known who Mr. W.H. was, despite numerous theories, or whether Shakespeare even authorised the publication. Critics praise the *Sonnets* as a profound meditation on the nature of love, sexual passion, procreation, death, and time.



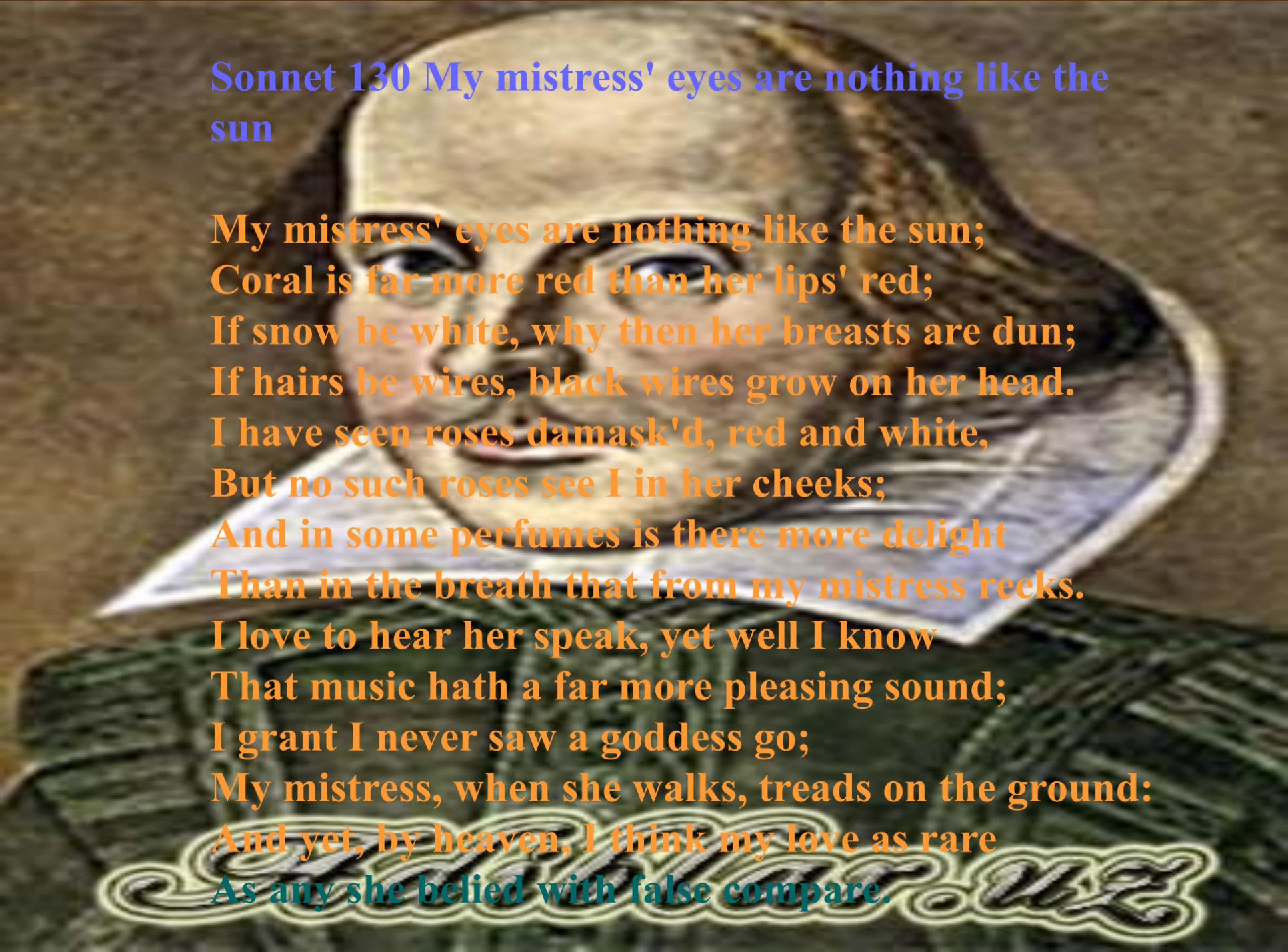


**Sonnet 02 When forty winters shall besiege thy brow**

When forty winters shall beseige thy brow,  
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,  
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,  
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:  
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,  
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,  
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,  
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.  
How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,  
If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine  
Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,'  
Proving his beauty by succession thine!  
This were to be new made when thou art old,  
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold

## Sonnet 22 My glass shall not persuade me I am old

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,  
So long as youth and thou are of one date;  
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,  
Then look I death my days should expiate.  
For all that beauty that doth cover thee  
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,  
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me:  
How can I then be elder than thou art?  
O, therefore, love, be of thyself so wary  
As I, not for myself, but for thee will;  
Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary  
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.  
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain;  
Thou gavest me thine, not to give back again.



**Sonnet 130 My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun**

**My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;  
And in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know  
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;  
I grant I never saw a goddess go;  
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:  
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
As any she belied with false compare.**



**Sonnet 121 'Tis better to be vile than vile  
esteemed**

**'Tis better to be vile than vile esteem'd,  
When not to be receives reproach of being,  
And the just pleasure lost which is so deem'd  
Not by our feeling but by others' seeing:  
For why should others false adulterate eyes  
Give salutation to my sportive blood?  
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,  
Which in their wills count bad what I think  
good?  
No, I am that I am, and they that level  
At my abuses reckon up their own:  
I may be straight, though they themselves be  
bevel;  
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be  
shown;  
Unless this general evil they maintain,  
All men are bad, and in their badness reign**

## Sonnet 33 Full many a glorious morning have I seen

Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:  
Even so my sun one early morn did shine  
With all triumphant splendor on my brow;  
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;  
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.  
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;  
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

