

# Shakespeare in Love Dramaturgy Packet

Fairfield Footlighters | 2025

## Pronunciations & Definitions [\(International Phonetic Alphabet\)](#)

**Agamemnon** /ə-ˈgə-ˈmem-nən/ (“ag-uh-MEM-non”)

a king of Mycenae and leader of the Greeks in the Trojan War; the first play (originally performed in 458 B.C.) in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* trilogy, it details the homecoming of Agamemnon from the Trojan War where his wife, Queen Clytemnestra, has been plotting his murder to avenge the sacrifice of her daughter Iphigenia, take the crown, and finally publicly embrace her lover Aegisthus

**Alleyn** /ˈa-lən/ (“AL-len”)

Edward “Ned” Alleyn, one of the greatest actors of the Elizabethan stage, rivaled only by Richard Burbage; renowned for his interpretations of Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *The Jew of Malta*

**anon** /ə-ˈnən/ (“uh-NON”)

soon, presently; after a while, later; at once

**Barabas** /bə-ˈra-bəs/ (“buh-RAB-us”)

the central character in Christopher Marlowe’s Elizabethan-era play, *The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta*, or simply *The Jew of Malta*, which contains themes of antisemitism, religious hypocrisy, greed, revenge, and Machiavellian strategy (manipulative, amoral, self-centered, cunning)

**blackamoor** /ˈbla-kə-ˌmʊr/

archaic, generally racist term for a dark-skinned person

**caveat emptor** /ˈka-vē-āt -ˈem(p)-tər/

a principle in commerce: without a warranty the buyer takes the risk; buyer beware

**Cheam** /tʃi:m/ (“CHEEM”)

a rural village in Surrey at the time, now a suburb of London 11 miles southwest of Charing Cross; thought to come from an Old English word meaning “village by a tree stump” or “homestead in a clearing”; where the fictional de Lesseps family lives

**Cheapside** /ˈtʃi:p.saɪd/ (“CHEEP-side”)

a historic market and street in the City of London, whose name means “market place”; Shakespeare used Cheapside as the setting for several bawdy scenes in *Henry IV, Part I*

**cur** /ˈkər/

a mongrel or inferior dog; a surly or cowardly fellow

**De Lesseps** /də ˈlesɛps/ (“duh LES-uhps”)

last name of this play’s protagonist, Viola

**Deptford** /'det-fərd/ (“DETT-furd”)

former metropolitan borough of southeastern London, now part of Lewisham; the place where Christopher Marlowe died

**doth** /'dəθ/ (“duth,” not “dawth”)

archaic present tense third-person singular of do; does

**dowry** /'daʊ(-ə)-rē/ (“DOW-ree”)

the money, goods, or estate that a woman brings to her husband in marriage

**exeunt** /'ek-sē-(.)ənt/ (“EX-ee-unt”)

used as a stage direction to specify that all or certain named characters leave the stage

**Faustus** /'faʊ-stəs/ (“FOW-stus”), also **Faust** /'faʊst/ (like “FOWst”)

a scholar of German legend who enters into a compact with the devil in return for magical power; Christopher Marlowe wrote *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, commonly referred to simply as *Doctor Faustus*, based on this legend; The Admiral's Men performed the play 23 times between September 1594 and October 1597

**forcemeat** /'fɔrs- ,mēt/

finely chopped and highly seasoned meat or fish that is either served alone or used as a stuffing

**Greenwich** /'gri-nich / (“GREN-itch”)

borough of eastern Greater London, England; home of Greenwich Palace, also called The Palace of Placentia, where Queen Elizabeth I was born (fun fact: the meridian that passes through Greenwich, which is called the Prime Meridian or the Greenwich Meridian, serves as the basis for standard time throughout much of the world and marks the dividing point between east longitude and west longitude)

**Hieronimo** (“eer-ON-i-mo”)

the title character in Thomas Kyd’s 1592 play, *The Spanish Tragedy*, where he is a Spanish marshal driven to madness by his son’s murder and later orchestrates a bloody revenge

**jocund** /'jə-kənd/ (“JAH-kund”)

marked by or suggestive of high spirits and lively mirthfulness; merry, jolly, festive

**kissing cousins**

a person—especially a relative—who you know well enough to kiss in a formal way when you meet; often used figuratively to describe two things that are similar or closely related

**knave** /'nāv/ (“NAVE”)

a tricky, deceitful fellow; a male/boy servant; a man of humble birth or position; the jack in playing cards

**lord chamberlain** /'lɔrd 'chām-bər-lən/ (“lord CHAIM-ber-lin”)

a royal officer and government official in England whose duties include the appointment of professional men and tradesmen for the court, the regulation of the royal theaters and chapels royal, and the licensing of all plays produced publicly in England

**Madeira** /mə- 'dir-ə/ (“muh-DEER-uh”)

an amber-colored fortified wine from the Portuguese island of Madeira

**maidenhead** / 'mā-də-n- ,hed/

virginity; the quality or state of being a maiden; sometimes refers to the hymen

**malkin** / 'mò(l)-kən/ (“MAHL-kin”)

a cat or hare; an untidy woman, or slattern

**mandragora** /man- 'dra-gə-rə/ (“man-DREG-or-uh”)

mandrake; a Mediterranean herb (*Mandragora officinarum*) of the nightshade family with large ovate leaves, greenish-yellow or purple flowers, and a large usually forked root resembling a human in form and formerly credited with magical properties; the root of a mandrake formerly used especially to promote conception, as a cathartic, or as a narcotic and soporific

**Mercutio** (“mer-KYOO-shee-oh”)

a character in Shakespeare’s play, *Romeo and Juliet*; a facetious close friend of Romeo who performs the Queen Mab speech in the first act and in act III fights Tybalt and dies

**mountebank** / 'maʊn-ti- ,bæŋk/ (“MOUN-teh-bank”)

a person who sells quack medicines from a platform; a charlatan

**odd’s fish**

interjection used as a mild oath; some say it comes from a mincing of “God’s face!”; it was a favorite exclamation of Charles II

**orison** / 'òr-ə-sən/ (“ORE-i-sun”)

prayer

**pippin** / 'pi-pən/

a crisp tart apple having usually yellow or greenish-yellow skin strongly flushed with red and used especially for cooking; in this instance, a euphemism for a woman’s breasts

**regina** /ri- 'jī-nə/ (“rej-EYE-na” in England in this context)

queen in Latin; part of the monarch’s royal cypher/monogram (which includes name and title) “ER” for Elizabeth Regina

**Richmond** / 'rich-mənd/

Richmond upon Thames, a borough of southwestern Greater London; home to Richmond Palace (built by Henry VII), where Shakespeare’s theatre company performed some plays during Elizabeth I’s reign

**Shoreditch** / 'shòr- ,dich/

former metropolitan borough of north central London that is now part of Hackney; The Theatre (opened 1576) and The Curtain Theatre (opened 1577) were located here

**sirrah** /'sir-ə/ (“SEAR-uh”)

used as a form of address implying inferiority in the person addressed

**stockfish** /'stāk-, fish/

fish (such as cod, haddock, or hake) dried hard in the open air without salt; in this case, used as an insult

**Tamburlaine** /'tæmbər, leɪn/ (“TAM-bur-layne”)

*Tamburlaine the Great*, a milestone Elizabethan play in two parts by Christopher Marlowe that is loosely based on the life of the Central Asian emperor Timur (Tamerlane/Timur the Lame), who defeated the Turks at Angora (1402) and died while invading China; it is an epic, blood-soaked tragedy—a portrait of absolute power at its most charismatic and violent

**Titus Andronicus** /,taɪtəs æn 'drɑːnɪkəs/ (“TY-tuss an-DRON-ih-kuss”)

the central character of *The Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus*, or simply *Titus Andronicus*; the first tragedy written by Shakespeare, it is notable for its violence and gore; in it, Titus, a general in the Roman army, presents Tamora, Queen of the Goths, as a slave to the new Roman emperor, Saturninus. Saturninus takes her as his wife. From this position, Tamora vows revenge against Titus for killing her son. Titus and his family retaliate, leading to a cycle of violence.

**Tybalt** /'tɪbɔlt/ (“TIH-buht”)

in Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet*, he is the son of Lady Capulet’s brother, Juliet’s short-tempered first cousin, and Romeo’s rival; he kills Romeo’s friend Mercutio, and Romeo then kills Tybalt; he’s mocked as “prince of cats” because he shares a name with the cat in the popular medieval story *Reynard the Fox* and has a sleek, violent manner

**Wabash** /'wò-, bash/ (“WAH-bash”)

a character’s name in the play

**Warwickshire** /'wär-ik-, shir/ (“WAR-ick-sheer”)

largely rural county of central England; Stratford-upon-Avon lies within it

**Whitehall** /'(h)wīt-, hòl/

once the site of Whitehall Palace, a vast royal residence, where several of William Shakespeare’s plays had their first performances; now a thoroughfare of London in which are located the chief offices of British government

**wounds** /'zün(d)z/ (“ZOOnds”)

euphemism for “God’s wounds”; used as a mild oath

Please enjoy this educational video for schools from the 1998 movie production:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAfih\\_YUgMk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAfih_YUgMk)

# Who's Who

## William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

English playwright, poet and actor who is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" or simply "the Bard." His extant works, including collaborations, consist of some 39 plays, 154 sonnets, three long narrative poems, and a few other verses, some of uncertain authorship. His plays are performed more often than those of any other playwright, he remains arguably the most influential writer in the English language, and his works continue to be studied and reinterpreted. In Shakespeare's day, English grammar, spelling, and pronunciation were less standardized than they are now, and his use of language helped to shape modern English. Expressions such as "with bated breath" (*Merchant of Venice*) and "a foregone conclusion" (*Othello*) have found their way into everyday speech.

Shakespeare was born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. At the age of 18, he married 26-year-old Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna (born six months after the marriage) and twins Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet died of unknown causes at the age of 11.

Sometime between 1585 and 1592 (the "lost years" after the twins' births), Shakespeare began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men after the ascension of King James I to the English throne. The Lord Chamberlain's Men performed at The Theatre (starting in 1594) and later his company used The Theatre's timbers to construct The Globe Theatre (1599). Shakespeare continued to act in his own and other plays after his success as a playwright.

Shakespeare produced most of his known works between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were primarily comedies and histories and are regarded as some of the best works produced in these genres. He then wrote mainly tragedies until 1608, among them *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, all considered to be among the finest works in English. In the last phase of his life, he wrote tragicomedies (also known as romances) such as *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* as well as collaborated with other playwrights.

At age 49 (around 1613), before the Globe Theatre burned down during a performance of *Henry VIII* in June, he appears to have retired to Stratford, where he died three years later. Few records of Shakespeare's private life survive; this has stimulated considerable speculation about such matters as his physical appearance, his sexuality, his religious beliefs, and even certain fringe theories as to whether the works attributed to him were written by others.

Shakespeare bequeathed the bulk of his large estate to his elder daughter Susanna. His will scarcely mentions his wife, Anne, who was probably entitled to one-third of his estate

automatically. He did make a point, however, of leaving her “my second best bed,” a bequest that has led to much speculation. Some scholars see it as an insult to Anne, whereas others believe that the second-best bed would have been the matrimonial bed and therefore rich in significance. His direct line ended after his grandchildren eventually died without heirs.

## Christopher “Kit” Marlowe (1564 – 1593)

One of the most famous Elizabethan playwrights, he was also a poet and translator of the Elizabethan era. Some scholars believe that he greatly influenced William Shakespeare, who was baptized in the same year as Marlowe and later succeeded him as the preeminent Elizabethan playwright.

Marlowe was the first to achieve critical reputation for his use of blank verse, which became the standard for the era. His plays are distinguished by their overreaching protagonists. Themes found within Marlowe’s literary works have been noted as humanistic with realistic emotions, which some scholars find difficult to reconcile with Marlowe’s “anti-intellectualism” and his catering to the salacious tastes of his Elizabethan audiences for generous displays of extreme physical violence, cruelty, and bloodshed.

Marlowe’s plays were enormously successful, possibly because of the imposing stage presence of his lead actor, Edward Alleyn. Marlowe’s plays were the foundation of the repertoire of Alleyn’s company, the Admiral’s Men, throughout the 1590s.

Shakespeare was much influenced by Marlowe in his work, as can be seen in the use of Marlovian themes in *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, and *Macbeth* (*Dido*, *Jew of Malta*, *Edward II*, and *Doctor Faustus*, respectively). There are also allusions to Marlowe’s work in *Hamlet* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

Little is otherwise known about Marlowe’s adult life. He has been described as a spy, a brawler, and a heretic, as well as a “magician,” “duellist,” “tobacco-user,” “counterfeiter,” and “rakehell” (a rake: womanizer or hellraiser). Much has been written on his brief adult life, including speculation of his involvement in royally sanctioned espionage, potential path as a Roman Catholic priest, his vocal declaration of atheism, his (possibly same-sex) sexual interests, and the puzzling circumstances surrounding his death.

Differing sensational reports of Marlowe’s death in 1593 abounded after the event and are contested by scholars today owing to a lack of good documentation. There has been much conjecture as to the nature and reason for his death, including a vicious bar-room fight, blasphemous libel against the church, homosexual intrigue, betrayal by another playwright, and espionage from the highest level: the Privy Council of Elizabeth I. An official coroner’s account of Marlowe’s death was discovered only in 1925, and it did little to persuade all scholars that it told the whole story, nor did it eliminate the uncertainties

present in his biography. Marlowe was buried in an unmarked grave in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Deptford.

## **Philip Henslowe (1550 – 1616)**

An Elizabethan theatrical entrepreneur and impresario (producer). He was also a businessman of many ventures. Henslowe's modern reputation rests on the survival of his diary, a primary source for information about the theatrical world of Renaissance London.

Henslowe recorded payments to 27 Elizabethan playwrights. He variously commissioned, bought and produced plays by, or made loans to Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton, Henry Chettle, George Chapman, Thomas Dekker, John Webster, Anthony Munday, Henry Porter, John Day, John Marston, and Michael Drayton. Performances of works with titles similar to Shakespearean plays, such as a *Hamlet*, a *Henry VI, Part 1*, a *Henry V*, a *Taming of the Shrew* and a *Titus Andronicus* are mentioned in the diary with no author listed. Most of these plays were recorded when the Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men briefly joined forces when the playhouses were closed owing to the plague (June 1594).

There is no mention of William Shakespeare (or Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd or any University Wits writer, or figures like Richard Burbage for that matter) in Henslowe's diary; their absence is due to the fact that Shakespeare and Burbage were only connected to Henslowe's companies in the early 1590s before Henslowe records any authors.

In 1587, Henslowe and John Cholmley built The Rose, the third of the large, permanent playhouses in London, and the first in Bankside. From 1591, Henslowe partnered with the Admiral's Men after that company split with The Theatre's James Burbage over the division of receipts. Edward Alleyn, the Admiral's' lead actor, married Henslowe's stepdaughter Joan in 1592, and they worked in partnership.

## **Richard Burbage (1567 – 1619)**

An English stage actor widely considered to have been one of the most famous actors of the Globe Theatre and of his time. In addition to being a stage actor, he was also a theatre owner, entrepreneur, and painter. Burbage was a business associate and friend to William Shakespeare.

Burbage was a popular actor by his early 20s. He excelled in tragedies and was a great box office draw. Edward Alleyn was the first English actor to manage roles of 800 lines or more, but the majority of these star roles, 13 of the 20 from the 1580 – 1610 era, were acted by Burbage.

Most famously he was the star of William Shakespeare's theatre company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which became the King's Men upon the ascension of James I in 1603. He played the title role in the first performances of many of Shakespeare's plays, including

*Hamlet* (for which some scholars believe Burbage is the inspiration, rather than Shakespeare's son Hamnet), *Othello*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*. He also appeared in the plays of many of the great contemporary writers, such as Ben Jonson, John Marston, John Webster, and Beaumont and Fletcher.

He was the son of James Burbage, a joiner who became a theatrical impresario and entrepreneur and founded a theatre. Richard's father was influential in many parts of the acting industry at the time, as he owned one of the largest theatres and directly worked with Shakespeare on his plays.

After the death of their father, Richard and his brother kept and leased the Blackfriars Theatre, but the other, called simply "The Theatre," was dismantled when they could not resolve terms for a new lease with the landowner. The beams, posts, and other remnants of The Theatre were moved to a new location on the south side of the Thames River and reassembled into a new playhouse called the Globe in 1599. Burbage was performing at the Globe on June 29, 1613, when it caught fire and burned down.

Burbage never retired from the stage; he continued acting until his death in 1619. His death caused such an outpouring of grief that it threatened to overshadow the official mourning for the death of Queen Anne 10 days prior.

## **William Kemp (more commonly Kempe) (1560 – 1603)**

An English actor and dancer (famous for jigs) who specialized in comic roles. He was best known as one of the original stage actors in early dramas by William Shakespeare, and roles associated with his name may include the comic creation Sir John Falstaff. As an actor, Kempe is with certainty associated with two roles: Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Peter in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Kempe's success and influence was such that in December 1598 he was one of a core of five actor-shareholders in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, alongside Shakespeare and Richard Burbage. He left the company shortly afterward. It is still unclear what caused him to depart.

Kemp had shared in the plans to construct the Globe Theatre, but he appeared in no productions in the Globe, which was open by mid-1599. Evidence from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, in which there is no promised continuation of a role for Falstaff, and from *Hamlet*, with its complaint about improvised clowning (Act 3, Scene 2), may suggest the circumstances in which Kempe was dropped. He played his last role for Shakespeare in 1598.

In February and March 1600, he undertook what he would later call his "Nine Days Wonder," in which he morris danced from London to Norwich, a distance of about 110 miles, a journey that took him nine days (spread over several weeks), often amid cheering crowds. He is assumed to have made another European tour, perhaps reaching Italy, but by



1601 he was borrowing money from Philip Henslowe and had joined Worcester's Men. The last undoubted mention of him occurs in Henslowe's diary in late 1602.

Despite his fame as a performer and his intention to continue his career, he appears to have died unregarded and in poverty circa 1603.

## **Edward “Ned” Alleyn (1566 – 1626)**

One of the greatest actors of the Elizabethan stage, he was known for his physical size and handling of commanding parts. Rivalled only by Richard Burbage, Alleyn won the outspoken admiration of such authors as Ben Jonson and Thomas Nashe for his interpretations of the title roles in three of Christopher Marlowe's major plays: *Doctor Faustus*, *Tamburlaine*, and Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*. He created the parts, which were probably written especially for him.

It is not known at what date he began to act, but in 1583 his name was on the list of the Earl of Worcester's players. Alleyn retired at the height of his fame around 1598, and it is said that Queen Elizabeth requested his return to the stage, which he did in 1604, the year after her death.

Alleyn went into business with his father-in-law, Philip Henslowe, and became wealthy. He was part-owner in Henslowe's ventures, and in the end sole proprietor of several profitable playhouses, bear-pits, and other rental properties. Among them were the Rose Theatre at Bankside, the Paris Garden, and the Fortune Theatre on Finsbury Fields. The Fortune was built for Alleyn and Henslowe in 1600, the year after the rival Globe Theatre was completed south of the river, but it was square rather than round and was occupied by the Admiral's Men, of which Alleyn was the head.

He married Joan Woodward, stepdaughter of Philip Henslowe, in 1592. She died in 1623, after which he married the daughter of the poet John Donne.

## **Queen Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603)**

Queen of England and Ireland from November 17, 1558, until her death in 1603. She was the last and longest-reigning (44 years) monarch of the House of Tudor. Her eventful reign and its effect on history and culture gave name to the Elizabethan era.

Elizabeth was the only surviving child of Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. When Elizabeth was 2 years old, her parents' marriage was annulled, her mother was executed, and Elizabeth was declared illegitimate. Henry restored her to the line of succession when she was 10.

During her half-sister Mary I's reign, Elizabeth was imprisoned for nearly a year on suspicion of supporting Protestant rebels. Upon Mary's 1558 death, Elizabeth succeeded to the throne and set out to rule by good counsel. One of her first actions as queen was the

establishment of an English Protestant church, of which she became the supreme governor. This arrangement would evolve into the Church of England.

It was expected that Elizabeth would marry and produce an heir; however, despite numerous courtships, she never did. Because of this she is sometimes referred to as the “Virgin Queen.”

The Elizabethan era is famous for the flourishing of English drama, led by playwrights such as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, the prowess of English maritime adventurers, such as Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh, and for the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

## **Edmund Tilney (1536 – 1610)**

A courtier best known now as Master of the Revels to Queen Elizabeth I and King James VI. He was responsible for the censorship of drama in England. He was also instrumental in the development of English drama of the Elizabethan period. Tilney made the office of Master of the Revels into an institution.

His father had been Usher of the Privy Chamber to King Henry VIII, and Edmund was a distant kinsman of Queen Elizabeth by virtue of the familial alliance with the Howards (an English noble family). The second Lord Howard became the Lord Chamberlain in 1574. The Revels Office has always been under the Lord Chamberlain, and Howard conferred the position of Master on Edmund. In July 1579, Edmund Tilney formally assumed the office of Master of the Revels, though he had been the acting Master since February 1578.

Tilney occupied this position as it underwent a significant change in focus. When he began his work, it consisted principally of planning and conducting royal entertainments as a unit of the Lord Chamberlain’s office. His principal aim was pleasing the Queen. Then, he started clearing up the various problems associated with the Revels office. It had fallen into major disrepute with creditors.

A commission issued on December 24, 1581, solved this financial crisis and enabled him to reduce the maintenance costs of the office to a moderate budget. The second section of the commission was to prohibit the discussion of any controversial issues in theatre. A play would be permitted only if the manuscript had the signature of the Master. Any offender could be imprisoned by Tilney’s orders. He was given complete authority in matters concerning drama, which was a responsibility that had been previously shared by Revels officers. He then became the censor of drama all over the country.

Tilney’s career as Master (1579–1610) spanned some of the most eventful years in the history of English drama. In 1576, The Theatre and The Curtain, the first public playhouses, were built. There were many more being built all over the country at this time. This led to a rapid proliferation of dramatic activity. It began with playwrights such as Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd who were drawing crowds with Tamburlaine and The Spanish

Tragedy. The entire career of William Shakespeare, with the exception of a few years, fell within Tilney's tenure of Mastership. The latter licensed thirty of Shakespeare's plays.

Tilney is also credited with the creation of the Queen's Company of actors. She had received a few players as part of her inheritance. However, Elizabeth never used them and usually asked Tilney to get either children or other companies to perform. Soon it became difficult to arrange for performances according to the court preferences. Some plays proved to be dull and were often cancelled. Just a few years after assuming office, Tilney chose 12 of the best actors from different companies and created the Queen's Men. Soon after this, the Queen's Men played a major part at all court performances. However, they had all but faded by the 1590s.

### **John Webster (1578 – 1632)**

An English Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatist best known for his intellectual and complex tragedies *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* (first performed by the King's Men about 1614 and published nine years later), which are often seen as masterpieces of the early 17th-century English stage. Despite his ability to write comedy, Webster is best known for these two brooding English tragedies based on Italian sources. His life and career overlapped with Shakespeare's.

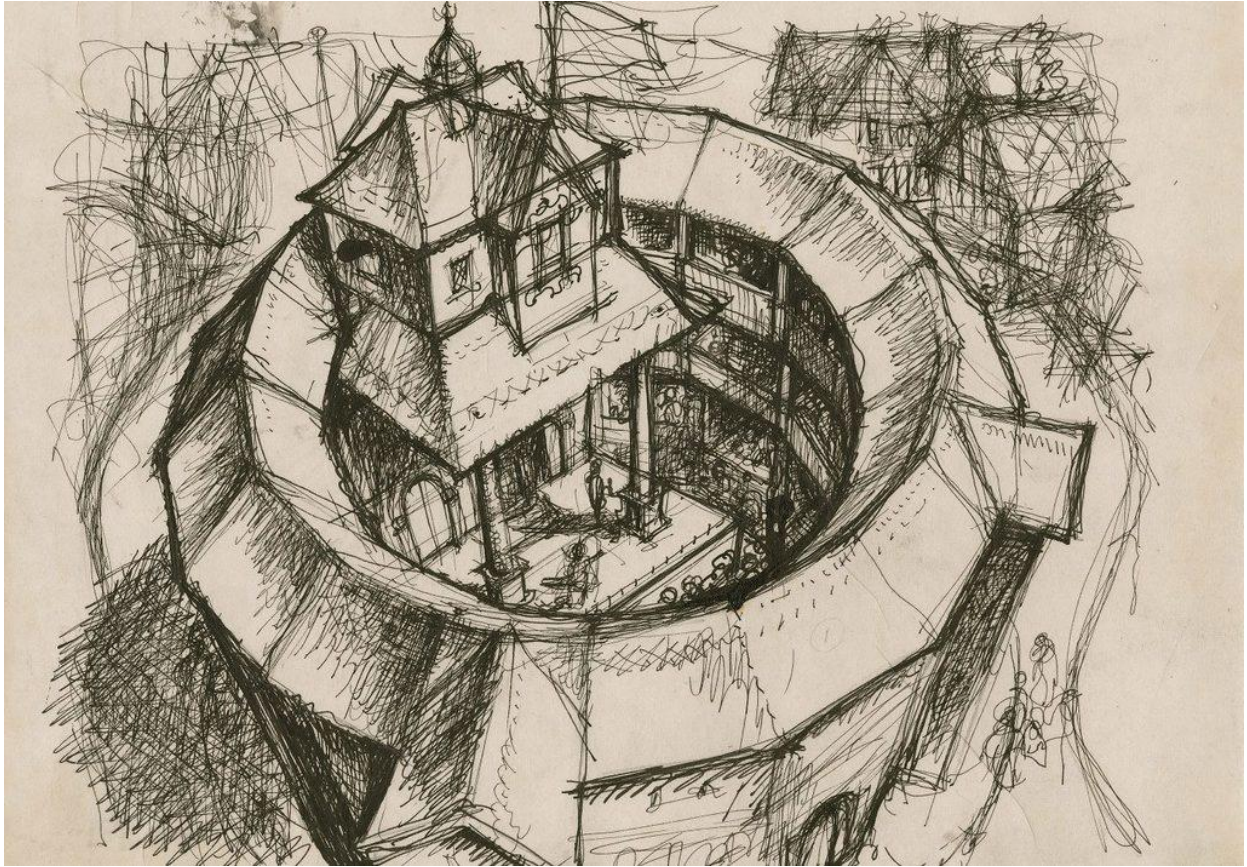
Webster's life is obscure and the dates of his birth and death are not certainly known. Most of what is known of him relates to his theatrical activities. Webster was still writing plays in the mid-1620s, but Thomas Heywood's *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels* (licensed November 7, 1634) speaks of him in the past tense, implying he was then dead.

By 1602, Webster was working with teams of playwrights on history plays, most of which were never printed. They included a tragedy, *Caesar's Fall* (written with Michael Drayton, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, and Anthony Munday), and a collaboration with Dekker, *Christmas Comes but Once a Year* (1602). With Dekker he also wrote *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, which was printed in 1607 and had probably been first performed in 1602. He worked with Dekker again on two city comedies, *Westward Ho* in 1604 and *Northward Ho* in 1605. Also in 1604, he adapted John Marston's *The Malcontent* for staging by the King's Men.

Webster has gained a reputation as the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatist with the most unsparingly dark vision of human nature, and his tragedies present a violent, pessimistic, and horrific vision of humanity.

# Historical Context

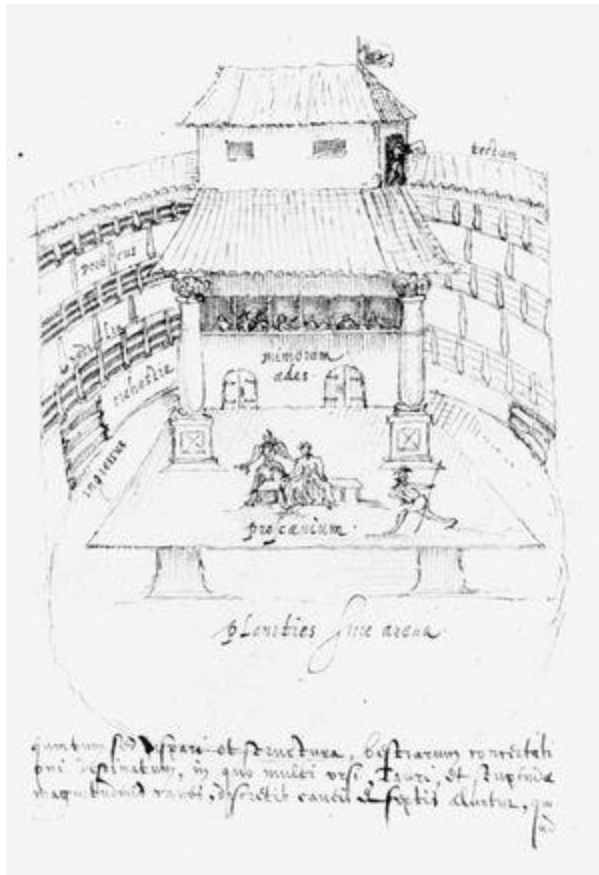
## Elizabethan Theatre



## Structure & Audience Experience

Most Elizabethan theaters were multi-sided structures—round, square, or octagonal—with a central, uncovered “**yard**” surrounded by three tiers of covered seating and a bare, raised stage at one end of the yard. Spectators could pay for seating at multiple price levels; those with the cheapest tickets (a penny) simply stood in the yard for the length of the plays—they were called **groundlings**. A balcony seat cost two pennies. Performances took place earlier in the day than they usually do now to take advantage of the daylight; there was no artificial lighting. If it rained, those in the yard simply got wet. Those in the seats were covered by a thatched roof.





There were no intermissions, though those with seats could purchase a cushion at an extra cost. Spectators liked to drink wine or ale and snack on a variety of foods as they watched the plays—modern-day excavations at the playhouses have turned up bottles, spoons, oyster shells, and the remnants of many fruits and nuts. Indoor performances could take place at indoor theaters and royal palaces—the latter of which was a high honor and was also well-paid.

The bare stages of Shakespeare’s day had little or no scenery except for objects required by the plot, like a throne, a grave, or a bed. Exits and entrances were in plain view of the audience, but they included some vertical options: actors could descend from the “heavens” above the stage or enter and exit from the “hell” below through a trapdoor. In most theatres the stage roof, supported by

two pillars set midway at the sides of the stage, concealed an upper area from which objects could be raised or lowered. Characters described as talking from “above” might appear in galleries midway between the stage and the heavens.

## Women’s Roles & Actor Duties

While most women’s roles were played by boys or young men in the all-male casts, comic female parts such as Juliet’s Nurse might be reserved for a popular adult comic actor, or clown. In addition to their dramatic talents, actors in Shakespeare’s time had to fence onstage with great skill, sing songs or play instruments included in the plays, and perform the vigorously athletic dances of their day.

Actors usually did not aim for historically accurate costumes, although an occasional toga may have appeared for a Roman play. Instead, they typically wore gorgeous modern dress, especially for the leading parts. Costumes, a major investment for an acting company, provided the essential “spectacle” of the plays and were often second-hand clothes once owned and worn by real-life nobles.

## Dumb Shows

In the theatre, dumb show, dumb-show, or dumbshow refers to a piece of dramatic mime, or more particularly a piece of action given in mime within a play to summarize,

supplement, or comment on the main action. Many performances began with a dumb show to foreshadow or illustrate the moral of the play and suggest what was about to happen.

Shakespeare used dumbshow in *Hamlet* for the play within a play staged by Prince Hamlet and the players for King Claudius.

## Jigs

In theatres, beginning in Elizabethan London, a jig was a short comic drama that immediately followed a full-length play. This phenomenon added an additional comic or light-hearted offering at the end of a performance. A jig might include songs sung to popular tunes of the day, and it might feature dance, stage fighting, cross-dressing, disguises, asides, masks, and elements of pantomime.

## Iambic Pentameter vs. Prose

In iambic pentameter, or blank verse, each line contains five stressed syllables and five (or a few more) un-stressed syllables, usually arranged in a neatly alternating pattern: de-DUM, de-DUM, de-DUM, de-DUM, de-DUM. Its underlying rhythm sounds like a heartbeat. Actors observe the stressed and un-stressed syllables much more subtly, but you'll still be able to hear the pattern of the meter.

*Ex: Your daughter here the princes left for dead. (Your-DAUGH-ter-HERE-the-PRINC-es-LEFT-for-DEAD.)*

In Shakespearean drama, verse is often used to indicate high-status characters or that someone is saying something important, while lower-class characters use prose, though that's not always the case.

Prose can be thought of as the language of wit and amusing conversation—for example, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, nearly three-quarters of the words spoken in the play are prose, not poetry. Almost everyone in the play speaks in prose most of the time, from the high-ranking Don Pedro to the much humbler Dogberry. By contrast, verse is the language of formality and ceremony. In general, however, a dramatic Shakespearean character speaking in poetry is much more likely to be speaking from the heart than one speaking in prose.

## Sonnets

The variation of the sonnet form that Shakespeare used—comprised of three quatrains and a concluding couplet, rhyming *abab cdcd efef gg*—is called the English or Shakespearean sonnet form, although others had used it before him. This different sonnet structure allows for more space to be devoted to the buildup of a subject or problem than the Italian/Petrarchan form, and it is followed by just two lines to conclude or resolve the poem in a rhyming couplet.

## Theatres

### *The Rose*

Built by theatre entrepreneur Philip Henslowe in 1587, it was the first of several playhouses to be situated in Bankside, Southwark, near the south shore of the River Thames. Two of the earliest plays by William Shakespeare—*Titus Andronicus* and *Henry VI, Part 1*—are recorded as having been performed there. It was a 14-sided polygon, about 72 feet in external diameter and about 47 feet wide inside. The original Rose was smaller than other theatres, only about two-thirds the size of the original Theatre built 11 years earlier, and its stage was also unusually small. Henslowe eventually enlarged the theatre for The Lord Admiral's Men, moving the stage further back (six feet, six inches) to make room for perhaps 500 extra spectators.

The Rose's success encouraged other theatre companies (e.g., The Swan, The Globe) to set up roots in the Bankside. The Rose appears to have differed from other theatres of the era in its ability to stage large scenes on two levels. It is thought that all Elizabethan theatres had a limited capability to stage scenes “aloft,” on an upper level at the back of the stage—as with Juliet at her window in *Romeo and Juliet*. It is thought that the Rose could accommodate larger assemblies of actors on the higher second level.

### *The Curtain*

Located in Hewett Street, Shoreditch, it opened in 1577 and continued staging plays until 1624. It was built some 200 yards south of London's first playhouse, The Theatre, which had opened a year before, in 1576. The name bears no relationship to the front curtain associated with modern theatres. The Curtain was rectangular, not round, which was unusual for the time, and it was probably an adaptation of an existing structure. The proprietor of the Curtain made an agreement with the proprietor of the Theatre, James Burbage (Richard Burbage's father), to use the Curtain as a supplementary house, or “easer,” to the more prestigious older playhouse.

Little is known of the companies that performed there, or of the plays they performed. From 1597 to 1599, it became the premier venue of Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, who had been forced to leave their former playing space at The Theatre after the latter closed in 1596. It was the venue of several of Shakespeare's plays, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry IV Part I* and *Part II*. The Lord Chamberlain's Men departed the Curtain when the Globe Theatre, which they built to replace the Theatre, was ready for use in 1599.

### *The Theatre*

The Theatre was an Elizabethan playhouse in Shoreditch. Built by James Burbage (Richard's father) in 1576, after the Red Lion, it was the first permanent theatre built exclusively for the showing of theatrical productions in England, and its first successful one. The Theatre's history includes a number of important acting troupes including the Lord Chamberlain's

Men, which employed Shakespeare as actor and playwright. After a dispute with the landlord, the theatre was dismantled and the timbers used in the construction of the Globe Theatre on Bankside.

### ***The Globe***

The Globe Theatre was a theatre in London associated with William Shakespeare. It was built using timber from an earlier theatre, The Theatre, in 1599 at Southwark, close to the south bank of the Thames, by Shakespeare's playing company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men. It was destroyed by fire on June 29, 1613. A second Globe Theatre was built on the same site by June 1614 and stayed open until the London theatre closures of 1642. As well as plays by Shakespeare, early works by Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker and John Fletcher were first performed here. A modern reconstruction of the Globe, named "Shakespeare's Globe," opened in 1997 approximately 750 feet from the site of the original theatre.

### **Troupes**

#### ***The Lord Chamberlain's Men***

A London-based theatrical company with which William Shakespeare was intimately connected for most of his professional career as a dramatist. The records of performances given at court show that they were by far the most favored of the theatrical companies. Their only rival was a company known during Elizabeth I's reign as the Admiral's Men and after that as Prince Henry's Men. Richard Burbage played most of the lead roles, including Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth. The Lord Chamberlain's Men performed at The Theatre, then the Curtain Theatre, then the Globe Theatre.

#### ***The Admiral's Men***

The Admiral's Men were led by their chief actor Edward "Ned" Alleyn, and their manager/employer was Philip Henslowe. The company was closely associated with Christopher Marlowe and performed several of his works, including *Tamburlaine the Great* and *Doctor Faustus*. They performed regularly in the provinces and at court, and during a time of difficulty moved into James Burbage's The Theatre. However, the Rose Theatre was their home for many years under Henslowe's management, and they later moved to the Fortune Theatre. Once considered the premier Elizabethan theatrical company, the Admiral's Men began to decline with the rise of the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

### **Other Notable People**

- **Thomas Dekker:** Elizabethan dramatist and pamphleteer, a versatile and prolific writer whose career spanned several decades and brought him into contact with many of the period's most famous dramatists; worked as a playwright for the Admiral's Men and other troupes
- **Robert Greene:** popular Elizabethan dramatist, author, and pamphleteer known for his negative critiques of his colleagues; one of the most popular English prose



writers of the later 16th century and Shakespeare's most successful predecessor in blank-verse romantic comedy; now best known for a posthumous pamphlet attributed to him, *Greene's Groats-Worth of Wit*, which is widely believed to contain an attack on William Shakespeare

- **Thomas Kyd:** an English playwright, the author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, and one of the most important figures in the development of Elizabethan drama
- **Henry Chettle:** an English dramatist and miscellaneous writer of the Elizabethan era, best known for his pamphleteering; Chettle was accused of writing *Greene's Groats-Worth of Wit* under Greene's name
- **Philip Sidney:** an Elizabethan courtier, statesman, soldier, poet, and patron of scholars and poets, considered the ideal gentleman of his day; after Shakespeare's sonnets, Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* is considered the finest Elizabethan sonnet cycle; his *The Defence of Poesie* introduced the critical ideas of Renaissance theorists to England
- **Beaumont and Fletcher (anachronistic):** the English dramatists Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, who collaborated in their writing during the reign of James I (1603–25)

## Non-Shakespeare Plays

- ***The Massacre at Paris*:** an Elizabethan play by Christopher Marlowe (1593) that concerns the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, which took place in Paris in 1572
- ***The Spanish Tragedy*:** an Elizabethan tragedy written by Thomas Kyd between 1582 and 1592; highly popular and influential in its time, *The Spanish Tragedy* established a new genre in English theatre: the revenge play or revenge tragedy; Hieronimo is one of the principal characters
- ***Tamburlaine the Great*:** a milestone Elizabethan play in two parts, written in 1587 or 1588 by Christopher Marlowe, that is loosely based on the life of the Central Asian emperor Timur (Tamerlane/Timur the Lame), who defeated the Turks at Angora (1402) and died while invading China; it is an epic, blood-soaked tragedy—a portrait of absolute power at its most charismatic and violent
- ***Agamemnon*:** the first play (originally performed in 458 B.C.) in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy, it details the homecoming of Agamemnon from the Trojan War where his wife, Queen Clytemnestra, has been plotting his murder to avenge the sacrifice of her daughter Iphigenia, take the crown, and finally publicly embrace her lover Aegisthus

## Geography

- **The provinces:** those parts of a country lying outside the capital and other large cities and regarded as outside the mainstream of sophisticated culture; in this play, used to describe anywhere in England that is outside of London
- **The suburbs:** similar to the provinces in the regard of this play's characters, these areas on the edges of London vary from residential neighborhoods to more commercial centers
- **Virginia (anachronistic):** by the time of the setting of the play, 1593, the colony of Virginia had been established and quickly abandoned (1590); 20 years later, the colony was re-settled at Jamestown
- **Putney Bridge (anachronistic):** a bridge over the River Thames that links Putney on the south side with Fulham on the north; before the first bridge was built in 1729, a ferry had shuttled between the two banks

## Customs of the Age

### Marriage

The early modern era in England (1550-1700) ushered in a variety of changes in the way people lived and how they viewed themselves. New economic opportunities, the weakening of family and community ties through greater mobility, and an increased awareness of individual rights and responsibilities led to a larger sense of independence and self-possession.

In Medieval England, marriages were often arranged—although mutual consent was generally desirable—and focused on kinship bonds and a rearrangement of property. Personal liking—or love—was not a requirement. This changed to a certain degree in the early modern era. While redistribution of resources still played a role in marriage choices—and loomed large in the essential negotiations of courtship—the emphasis on the wider collective interests of kin, community, and lordship began taking a back seat to warmer domestic values and greater individual choice.

Parents still exercised considerable control over marriage selection—and few people married without regard for questions of property and financial well-being—but children were now being given the right of veto and a somewhat greater latitude to follow their hearts in the choice of a spouse. The fact that many young people left their towns and families to seek service and apprenticeships elsewhere also meant that they were freer to pursue courtship with a relative lack of supervision.

Such freedom of choice, however, was not always an option for the upper classes, where arranged marriages remained common. Girls who had strong ideas about the choice of a husband which were not in tune with their fathers' wishes either had to risk parental

disapproval by “stealing a marriage” or accept an arranged marriage with however much grace they could muster. As historian Lisa Hopkins writes, “aristocratic marriages were often strikingly—if perhaps not pleasantly—different from those lower down the social scale: they tended to operate as a much looser tie and to function less in terms of a lifelong bond than of a union whose specific purposes were the cementing of alliances and the production of children.” It is perhaps no wonder that, between 1595 and 1620, an estimated one-third of the old nobility lived separately from their wives.

Wives were regarded as the property of their husbands, and the women were expected to get married and be dependent on the male population all their life. Men were expected to take a woman’s hand in marriage, and marriage was a requirement to be able to take legal command of the household, work in a public office, or serve in any position with civic duties.

## **Societal Classes**

### ***The Monarch***

Queen Elizabeth I, the sixth and last ruler of Tudor, ruled for 45 years.

Why does she sometimes refer to herself as “we”? The royal we, also known as the majestic plural or royal plural, is the use of “we,” “us,” or “our” by a monarch or high office holder to refer to oneself.

### ***Nobility***

Nobility and knights were still at the top of the social ladder. These men were rich and powerful, and they had large households. Within the nobility class there was a distinction between old families and new. Most of the old families were Catholic, and the new families were Protestant. During Shakespeare’s time, there were only about 55 noble families in England. At the head of each noble family was a duke, a baron, or an earl. This class contained the lords and ladies of the land.

A person became a member of nobility by birth or by a grant from the monarch. Noble titles were hereditary, passing from father to oldest son. It took a crime such as treason for a nobleman to lose his title. Many nobles died during the War of the Roses, a series of civil wars fought during the 15th century. The Tudor monarchy—Elizabeth, her father Henry VIII, and her grandfather Henry VII—rarely appointed new nobles to replace those who died. They viewed the nobility class as a threat to their power and preferred to keep the number of them small.

Being a member of the nobility class often brought debt rather than profit. The expectations of the class and the nonpaying honorific offices could bring terrible financial burdens. They maintained huge households, and conspicuous consumption and lavish entertainment were expected. Appointment to a post as a foreign ambassador required the ambassador to maintain a household of as many 100 attendants. Most of Queen Elizabeth’s council,

chief officers in the counties, came from the noble families. They were expected to serve in an office, such as being an ambassador to a foreign country, at their own expense, of course.

### ***The Gentry***

The Gentry class included knights, squires, gentlemen, and gentlewomen who did not work with their hands for a living. Their numbers grew during Queen Elizabeth's reign and became the most important social class in England. Wealth was the key to becoming a part of the gentry class. This class was made of people not born of noble birth who, by acquiring large amounts of property, became wealthy landowners. Francis Drake, the famous explorer, and Sir Walter Raleigh, who led the way to the English colonization of America, were of the gentry class. Two of the queen's chief ministers, Burgley and Walsingham, were products of the gentry. Francis Bacon, the great essayer and philosopher, also came from this class. The gentry went to Parliament and served as justices of the Peace. They combined the wealth of the nobility with the energy of the sturdy peasants from whom they had sprung.

### ***Merchants***

The Tudor era saw the rise of modern commerce, with cloth and weaving leading the way. The prosperous merchant class emerged from the ashes of the Wars of the Roses. The prosperity of the wool trade led to a surge in building. Shipping products from England to various ports in Europe and to the New World also became a profitable business for the merchants.

### ***Yeomanry***

This was the "middling" class who saved enough to live comfortably but who at any moment, through illness or bad luck, could be plunged into poverty. This class included farmers, tradesmen, and craft workers. They took their religion seriously and could read and write. This class of people was prosperous, and sometimes their wealth could exceed those of the gentry, but the difference was how they spent their wealth. The yeomen were content to live more simply, using their wealth to improve their land and expand it.

### ***Laborers***

The last class of Elizabethan England was the day laborers, poor husbandmen, and some retailers who did not own their own land. Artisans, shoemakers, carpenters, brick masons, and all those who worked with their hands belonged to this class of society. In this class we can also put idle serving-men and beggars. Under Queen Elizabeth I, the government undertook the job of assisting the laborer class, and the result was the famous Elizabethan Poor Laws, which resulted in one of the world's first government-sponsored welfare programs.

## Social Dance

Renaissance social dances fell into two broad categories. The first category consisted of simple dances that took little or no practice that included an unlimited number of participants dancing in circles, lines, or columns, such as *branles* and the pavan. The second category consisted of complex dances that required the services of a dancing master as well as considerable practice to perfect. Although choreographed primarily as duets, the complex dances could be set figures for up to eight performers; they were performed for a viewing audience and the figures were designed to be viewed from the front, the sides, or from above the dance floor. Figures traced on the floor had well understood meanings at the time (triangles, spirals, interlocking rings) so that subtle messages could be conveyed through gestures and patterns.

Dance was also a courtship ritual, so dancing skills had to be mastered in one's youth. Marriage age was sometimes as early as twelve, so young men and women of the court had to be accomplished dancers before their teens, often beginning tutored training at the age of six.

## Twelfth Night (Holiday)

Twelfth Night—sometimes also known as Epiphany Eve, depending upon the tradition—is a Christian festival on the last night of the Twelve Days of Christmas, marking the coming of the Epiphany (January 6). Different traditions mark the date of Twelfth Night as either January 5 or 6, depending on whether the counting begins on Christmas Day (December 25) or December 26. It was originally a Catholic holiday, and these were sometimes occasions for revelry, like other Christian feast days. Servants often dressed up as their masters, men as women, and so forth.

*Twelfth Night, or What You Will* is a romantic comedy by William Shakespeare believed to have been written around 1601–1602 as a Twelfth Night entertainment for the close of the Christmas season.

The actual Elizabethan festival of Twelfth Night involved the antics of a Lord of Misrule, who, before leaving his temporary position of authority, called for entertainment, songs, and mummery; the play has been regarded as preserving this festive and traditional atmosphere of licensed disorder. This leads to the general inversion of the order of things, most notably gender roles.

## Money

The basic denominations were pounds, shillings and pence. The written abbreviation for pound is £, for shilling is s and for penny/pence is d. (Pence, not pennies, is the plural of penny). 12 pence make 1 shilling, and 20 shillings make 1 pound. 1 pound is 240 pence.

Half penny	½ penny	Silver
Three farthings	¾ penny	Silver
Penny	1 penny	Silver
Three half pence	1½ pence	Silver
Half groat	2 pence	Silver
Threepence	3 pence	Silver
Groat	4 pence	Silver
Sixpence	6 pence	Silver
Shilling	12 pence = 1 shilling	Silver
Half crown	2 shilling and 6 pence	Silver

Half crown	2 shilling and 6 pence	Gold
Quarter angel	2 shilling and 6 pence	Gold
Crown	5 shillings	Silver
Crown	5 shillings	Gold
Half angel	5 shillings	Gold
Angel	10 shillings	Gold
Half pound sovereign	10 shillings	Gold
Ryal	15 shillings	Gold
Pound sovereign	20 shillings = 1 pound	Silver
Gold sovereign	30 shillings	Gold

## Sayings

- **“I am for you”** (p. 74): An old-fashioned way to say “I’m your man—I’m going to fight you.”
- **“Spare no quarter”** (p. 102): Show no pity or mercy—treat an enemy, opponent, etc., in a very harsh way. Also sometimes, during military conflict or piracy, implies that combatants would not be taken prisoner, but executed (a war crime since 1899).

- **“Cor... fanks!”** (p. 108): “Cor” is a euphemistic mangling of “God” to avoid swearing. “Fanks” is likely just “thanks” with the pronunciation of th- as /f/.

## Allusions & In-Jokes

### Lines From Plays & Sonnets

#### “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”

Sonnet 18 is one of the best-known of the 154 sonnets written by English poet and playwright William Shakespeare.<sup>1</sup> Scholars tend to agree that it addresses the “Fair Youth” (addressed by the poet in Sonnets 1–126), an unnamed young man who is handsome, self-centred, universally admired, and much sought after.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Will is struggling to compose the sonnet until (with much help from Marlowe) he discovers Viola as his muse and tries to woo her.

#### “Out, damn Spot!”

“Out damned spot” is a line spoken by Lady Macbeth in Act 5, Scene 1 in Shakespeare’s play, *Macbeth*.<sup>2</sup> She is walking and talking in her sleep about the assassination of King Duncan, in which she is implicated. As she walks, she rubs her hands as though washing them, trying to get rid of the blood. The spot she’s referring to is a spot of blood on her hand.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, the dog is named Spot and is being told by Burbage to get out (p. 16).

#### “Marries a blackamoor and is strangled with a handkerchief?”

This is a reference to Shakespeare’s play *Othello*. A handkerchief was Othello’s first gift to his wife, Desdemona, and she always keeps it with her. She loses it and it falls into the hands of scheming Iago, a soldier and ensign. Iago engineers a scheme leading Othello to believe Desdemona is unfaithful. Ultimately, Othello kills Desdemona by smothering her, and he ultimately stabs and kills himself upon realizing his error and the manipulation.<sup>3</sup>

There is no final consensus over Othello’s ethnicity, whether of Maghrebi origin, as in the generally accepted definition of “Moor,” or of Sub-Saharan African, though he is certainly portrayed with dark skin.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Will and Marlowe discuss how *Romeo and Ethel the Pirate’s Daughter* is to end. Will asks what happens to Ethel, and Marlowe suggests she “marries a blackamoor and is strangled with a handkerchief” (p. 23).

### **“Tomorrow.” “Tomorrow and...” “Tomorrow.”**

“Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow” is part of a soliloquy from the titular character in Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*.<sup>4</sup> Troops are approaching Macbeth's castle to besiege it, and Macbeth has just heard news that his wife, Lady Macbeth, is dead. The speech is a nihilistic, weary view of the futility and meaninglessness of life.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Henslowe asks “When can I see pages?” Putting it off, as they’re not written yet, Will responds, “Tomorrow.” Henslowe says, “Tomorrow and...” before Will replies, “Tomorrow” (p. 26).

### **“Speak it to me again. Let it trip off the tongue.”**

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet instructs a troupe of players on how to act well, telling them, “Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue.”<sup>5</sup> He is setting up a play within the play so he can observe his uncle Claudius's reaction to a murder scene that mirrors Hamlet's suspicions of how Claudius murdered Hamlet's father. By this, he hopes to prove Claudius's guilt.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Will is captivated by Viola's audition as Thomas Kent, so he tries to get her to say the lines again and to see her face (p. 27).

### **“O brave new world!”**

In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Prospero, the Duke of Milan, has been overthrown by his brother. He is placed in a boat full of his books, with his baby daughter, Miranda, and set adrift. The boat is thrown up on a Mediterranean island. During the 15 years on the island, Prospero had studied so much that he had surpassed all knowledge of science and entered the realm of magic.

When we first see him, he is a fully-fledged magician. Miranda has been tutored by him, and she is now an educated young woman, although she knows very little about the outside world. When Prospero's enemies, all corrupt European politicians, are passing the island, he causes the ship to be wrecked and they land on the island, where Prospero manipulates them and controls their actions. Miranda, who has never seen a human being apart from her father, meets them, and is impressed with their clothes and their beautiful physical form, particularly the handsome young sailors.<sup>6</sup>

The phrase is also the title of a science fiction novel by Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, published in 1932.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Will exclaims, “Thomas? Viola? O brave new world! Are you my actor or my muse?” after discovering from the boatman that Thomas Kent is Viola in disguise (p. 59).



## **“The play’s the thing!”**

In Shakespeare’s [Hamlet, Act II, Scene 2](#), the title character says “The play’s the thing / Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King.” In the beginning of the play, Hamlet’s father’s ghost had appeared and told Hamlet that he, his father, was murdered by his brother, Hamlet’s uncle Claudius, who is now king. Hamlet intends to stage a play (*The Murder of Gonzago*) that depicts the murder exactly as he suspects it occurred, all to touch the guilty conscience of Claudius and make him visibly react, therefore confirming to Hamlet his guilt.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Burbage exclaims “The play’s the thing!” after taking by force the manuscript for *Romeo and Juliet*—or so he thinks—so he can stage it at his own theater (p. 76). (It’s actually Webster’s swapped copy of *Gammer Gurton’s Needle*.)

## **“Avaunt and quit my sight, thou phantom!”**

“Avaunt” means “away, hence” or “begone.” In *Macbeth*, Macbeth is talking to the bloody ghost of his friend, Banquo, whom he just had murdered.<sup>7</sup> Only Macbeth can see the specter during a banquet with his wife and guests.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Wessex speaks this line after Will—whom Wessex had mistaken for Marlowe—appears in Viola’s bedchamber after news of Marlowe’s death has spread (p. 82).

## **“This is a dagger.”**

In Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Macbeth speaks the famous line, “Is this a dagger which I see before me, / The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.”<sup>8</sup> It is from one of the most famous soliloquies from Shakespeare, and it reveals Macbeth’s murderous plan to kill the King and take the crown as his own. Inspired in part by his own ambition, the decision to murder King Duncan is aided by the prophecies of the Witches as well as the insistent urging of his wife. Still, Macbeth is wracked with guilt over what he is about to do. He first sees a dagger hanging mid-air, and then he sees it with blood dripping from it.

It’s probably a stretch to count it as a reference in *Shakespeare in Love*, but it could have been intended that way. After interrupting a rehearsal and intending to kill “Marlowe,” Wessex discovers that his prey is actually Shakespeare (p. 86). They fight, and a prop dagger fails to do any damage to Wessex. He then pulls his real knife, declaring “This is a dagger.” Is it also a [Crocodyl Dundee](#) reference? You decide.

## **“Enemies. Brothers. Lend me your ears.”**

“Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears” is the first line of a speech by Mark Antony in Shakespeare’s play *Julius Caesar*.<sup>9</sup> Antony has been allowed by Brutus and the other conspirators to make a funeral oration for Caesar on condition that he will not blame

them for Caesar's death; however, while Antony's speech outwardly begins by justifying the actions of Brutus and the assassins, Antony uses rhetoric and genuine reminders to ultimately portray Caesar in such a positive light that the crowd is enraged against the conspirators.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Viola is exposed by Webster and Tilney, and Tilney closes down the Rose Theatre for public indecency: “for the displaying of a female on the public stage.” With the continuation of the production seeming to be hopeless, Burbage saves the day by proposing that the show move to the Curtain Theatre, beginning with, “Enemies. Brothers. Lend me your ears” (p. 88).

### **“A hit. A palpable hit!”**

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet fences Laertes in the culminating scene (ultimately, Hamlet, Laertes, Gertrude, and Claudius all die in this scene). Osric, a courtier, acts as the referee and confirms that Hamlet has scored a clear and undeniable hit in the duel. After Hamlet asks for a judgment, Osric says, “A hit, a very palpable hit.” — *Hamlet*, Act V, Scene 2, line 304 by William Shakespeare

In *Shakespeare in Love*, just before the final scene of the performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, Henslowe exclaims, “A hit. A palpable hit!” referring to the show's sure success and good reception (p. 105).

### **“Was this the face that launched a thousand ships / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium? / Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.”**

In *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, commonly referred to simply as *Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe, these lines come from a speech that Faustus makes as he nears the end of his life and begins to realize the terrible nature of the bargain he has made with the devil (his soul for magical power). Despite his sense of foreboding, Faustus enjoys his powers, as the delight he takes in conjuring up Helen makes clear. Ilium refers to Troy, which was destroyed in the legendary Trojan War in Greek mythology.

It is frequently quoted out of context to convey astonishment at Helen's beauty. However, in *Doctor Faustus*, it is said to a devil posing as Helen, and is a response to the illusion; it may even express disappointment that she is not more beautiful.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, actor after actor uses this monologue to audition for Shakespeare's play because it was so popular at the time (p. 24).

## Other References

### ***The Two Gentlemen of Verona | Valentine and Silvia***

This is a comedy by William Shakespeare, believed to have been written between 1589 and 1593. It is considered by some to be Shakespeare's first and weakest play, and it is often seen as showing his first tentative steps in laying out some of the themes and motifs with which he would later deal in more detail; for example, it is the first of his plays in which a heroine dresses as a boy.

The play deals with the themes of friendship and infidelity, the conflict between friendship and love, and the foolish behavior of people in love. The highlight of the play is considered by some to be Launce, the clownish servant of Proteus, and his dog Crab, to whom “the most scene-stealing non-speaking role in the canon” has been attributed.

Plot: Valentine is a gentleman of Verona who leaves for Milan, where he falls in love with the Duke's daughter, Silvia. She clearly prefers this suitor to the wealthy but foppish Thurio, whom her father intends her to marry. Valentine's friend, Proteus (in love with Julia back home), also arrives in Verona and falls in love with Silvia and gets Valentine banished by the Duke. Valentine ends up the leader of a band of outlaws in the forest. Julia gets her maid to help her dress like a boy and makes her way to Verona to join her lover Proteus. She discovers his infidelity and disguises herself as Sebastian and becomes his page boy. Proteus sends Julia/Sebastian to Silvia with a gift of a ring that Julia had given him before he left Verona. Silvia scorns Proteus's affections, repelled by his inconstancy to the lover he has left behind, and she flees to the forest and becomes the outlaws' prisoner. Proteus rescues her and tries to force himself on her, but Valentine intervenes. Proteus is ashamed and forgiven. Julia's identity is revealed, and Proteus vows fidelity to her again. The outlaws bring in the Duke and Thurio, who renounces his claim on Silvia after a threat of violence from Valentine. The Duke, disgusted by Thurio's cowardice, approves of Valentine and Silvia's match. The two couples are happily married.

Much of *Shakespeare in Love* mirrors *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, both in structure and in subject matter. Not only do characters discuss the play, quote it, and admire it, but *SIL* also contains instances of cross-dressing disguise, forbidden love, a close call with sexual assault, and a scene-stealing dog. Viola wishes for a love not like Valentine and Silvia's, “but the love that overthrows life. Unbiddable, ungovernable, like a riot in the heart, and nothing to be done, come ruin or rapture. Love like there has never been in a play ... But I would be Valentine and Silvia too, somehow” (p. 19).

### ***Twelfth Night (Play)***

*Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, is a romantic comedy by Shakespeare. *Shakespeare in Love* contains several references to it, and the plot of our play is framed as the events that inspire Shakespeare to write *Twelfth Night*.

*Twelfth Night* centers on the twins Viola and Sebastian, who are separated in a shipwreck. Viola (disguised as a page named Cesario) falls in love with the Duke Orsino, who in turn is in love with Countess Olivia. Upon meeting Viola, Countess Olivia falls in love with her, thinking she is a man.

Similarities: Viola as the main character, cross-dressing/mistaken identity, situational romantic comedies that convey a tragedy, love triangles (less of a triangle in *SIL*).

## **Mistress Quickly**

Mistress Nell Quickly is a fictional character who appears in several plays by William Shakespeare. She is an innkeeper who runs the Boar's Head Tavern, at which Sir John Falstaff and his disreputable cronies congregate. The character appears in four plays: *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Henry IV, Part 2*, *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, Mistress Quickly is the wardrobe mistress whose name is an homage to the character from Shakespeare's plays.

## **Nurse**

The Nurse is a character in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. She is the personal servant, guardian, and former wet nurse of Juliet Capulet, and has been since Juliet was born. The Nurse is Juliet's foremost confidante, and consequently very important to Juliet's life. She is one of the few people, along with Friar Laurence, to be made aware of the blossoming romance between Romeo and Juliet.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, it's clear how Viola's Nurse is Will's inspiration for Juliet's Nurse. She plays the same role as servant and guardian, and she protects Viola's secret once she discovers her love affair with Will, becoming an accomplice to the shenanigans.

## **Queen Mab**

Queen Mab is a fairy referred to in Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. The character Mercutio famously describes her as "the fairies' midwife," a miniature creature who rides her chariot (which is driven by a team of atom-sized creatures) over the bodies of sleeping humans during the nighttime, thus helping them "give birth" to their dreams.<sup>10</sup> Later depictions in other poetry and literature and various guises in drama and cinema have typically portrayed her as the Queen of the Fairies.

## **Balcony Scene**

In this famous scene in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo sneaks into the Capulet orchard and overhears Juliet at her window vowing her love to him in spite of her family's hatred of the Montagues. Romeo makes himself known to her and attempts to use the sonnet form to pledge his love. Quickly, they agree to be married. Throughout, the Nurse is calling for Juliet, and she repeatedly replies "anon."<sup>11</sup>

In *Shakespeare in Love*, the balcony scene is played as though it is the inspiration for its inclusion in Shakespeare's tragedy. There are similarities (profession of love, use of poetry, calling "anon" to the nurse), but there is an added layer of a hidden Marlowe feeding Will lines. This is reminiscent of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, another classic play from 1897 that is set in 17-century Paris.

In *Cyrano de Bergerac*, which is written in verse, the title character is a brash man of many talents, including dueling and poetry, but his huge nose makes him doubt himself. He is in love with Roxane, who loves poetry, but he lacks confidence to pursue her. Christian, Cyrano's fellow soldier who has no poetic ability, is in love with Roxane as well, so Cyrano helps Christian woo her by helping him write her eloquent letters. In a balcony scene echoing that of *Romeo and Juliet*, Roxane is on her balcony and insists that Christian improvises about love to her. Cyrano makes Christian stand in front of Roxane's balcony and speak to her while Cyrano stands under the balcony whispering to Christian what to say. Eventually, Cyrano shoves Christian aside and, under cover of darkness, pretends to be Christian, wooing Roxane himself. In the process, he wins a kiss for Christian.

### ***Gammer Gurton's Needle***

A 16th-century Middle English rustic comedy play of unknown authorship that relies on scatological humor; it includes perhaps the only time in Elizabethan drama a character fully soils himself on stage. It is also filled with explosive violence and culminates in what is likely to be the earliest scene in English literature of an officer bringing all the characters together to solve a mystery.

Synopsis: Gammer Gurton has lost her sewing needle, leaving her servant Hodge with large holes in the buttocks of his breeches. The vagabond Diccon sees a chance to sow chaos (pun intended) and, through a series of outrageous lies, turns a neighborhood on its head.

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<sup>1</sup> Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.  
— Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare

<sup>2</sup> LADY MACBETH: Yet here's a spot.  
DOCTOR: Hark, she speaks. I will set down what comes

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from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

LADY MACBETH: Out, damned spot, out, I say! One. Two. Why then, 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie, a soldier and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

DOCTOR: Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH: The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that. You mar all with this starting.

DOCTOR: Go to, go to. You have known what you should not.

GENTLEWOMAN: She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

LADY MACBETH: Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. O, O, O!

— *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene 1, lines 33-55 by William Shakespeare

<sup>3</sup> OTHELLO: That handkerchief

Which I so loved, and gave thee, thou gav'st to Cassio.

DESDEMONA: No, by my life and soul! Send for the man And ask him.

OTHELLO: Sweet soul, take heed, take heed of perjury. Thou art on thy deathbed.

— *Othello*, Act V, Scene 2, lines 58-64 by William Shakespeare

<sup>4</sup> SEYTON: The Queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH: She should have died hereafter.

There would have been a time for such a word.

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day

To the last syllable of recorded time,

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

— *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene 5, lines 19-31 by William Shakespeare

<sup>5</sup> HAMLET: Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O,

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it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious,  
periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very  
rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the  
most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable  
dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow  
whipped for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods  
Herod. Pray you, avoid it.  
— *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 2, lines 1-15 by William Shakespeare

<sup>6</sup> MIRANDA: O wonder!  
How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O, brave new world  
That has such people in 't!  
PROSPERO: 'Tis new to thee.  
— *The Tempest*, Act V, Scene 1, lines 215-219 by William Shakespeare

<sup>7</sup> MACBETH: [to the Ghost]  
Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee.  
Thy bones are marrowless; thy blood is cold;  
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes  
Which thou dost glare with.  
— *Macbeth*, Act III, Scene 4, lines 113-116 by William Shakespeare

<sup>8</sup> MACBETH: Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw. [*He draws his dagger.*]  
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going,  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses  
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,  
And, on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before. There's no such thing.  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one-half world  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's off'rings, and withered murder,  
Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives.  
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.  
[*A bell rings.*]  
I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.  
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell

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That summons thee to heaven or to hell.  
— *Macbeth*, Act II, Scene 1, lines 44-77

<sup>9</sup> ANTONY: Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.  
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.  
The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interrèd with their bones.  
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus  
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.  
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,  
And grievously hath Caesar answered it.  
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest  
(For Brutus is an honorable man;  
So are they all, all honorable men),  
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me,  
But Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honorable man.  
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,  
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.  
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?  
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;  
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honorable man.  
You all did see that on the Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And sure he is an honorable man.  
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
But here I am to speak what I do know.  
You all did love him once, not without cause.  
What cause withholds you, then, to mourn for him?—  
O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason!—Bear with me;  
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.  
— *Julius Caesar*, Act III, Scene 2, lines 82-117 by William Shakespeare

<sup>10</sup> MERCUTIO: O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.  
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes  
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone  
On the fore-finger of an alderman,  
Drawn with a team of little atomies  
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep;  
Her wagon-spokes made of long spiders' legs,  
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,  
The traces of the smallest spider's web,  
The collars of the moonshine's watery beams,  
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,  
Her wagoner a small grey-coated gnat,  
Not so big as a round little worm  
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;  
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut



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Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,  
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.  
And in this state she gallops night by night  
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;  
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight,  
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees,  
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,  
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,  
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are:  
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,  
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;  
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail  
Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep,  
Then dreams, he of another benefice:  
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,  
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,  
Of healths five-fathom deep; and then anon  
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,  
And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two  
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab  
That plats the manes of horses in the night,  
And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hairs,  
Which once untangled, much misfortune bodes:  
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,  
That presses them and learns them first to bear,  
Making them women of good carriage:  
This is she—  
— *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene 4, lines 553-595 by William Shakespeare

<sup>11</sup> ROMEO: He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

*Enter Juliet above.*

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief  
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.  
Be not her maid since she is envious.  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,  
And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off.  
It is my lady. O, it is my love!  
O, that she knew she were!  
She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?  
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.  
I am too bold. 'Tis not to me she speaks.  
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?  
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars  
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not night.  
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand.  
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,

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That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET: Ay me.

ROMEO: *aside* She speaks.

O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art  
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,  
As is a wingèd messenger of heaven  
Unto the white-upturnèd wond'ring eyes  
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him  
When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds  
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET: O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name,  
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO: *aside*

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET: 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.

Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face. O, be some other name  
Belonging to a man.

What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other word would smell as sweet.  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
And, for thy name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

ROMEO: I take thee at thy word.

Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized.

Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET: What man art thou that, thus bescreened in night,  
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO: By a name

I know not how to tell thee who I am.

My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself

Because it is an enemy to thee.

Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET: My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words

Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound.

Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

ROMEO: Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

JULIET: How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?

The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,  
And the place death, considering who thou art,  
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO: With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls,  
For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.

Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

JULIET: If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO: Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye  
Than twenty of their swords. Look thou but sweet,  
And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET: I would not for the world they saw thee here.

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ROMEO: I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes,  
And, but thou love me, let them find me here.  
My life were better ended by their hate  
Than death proroguèd, wanting of thy love.  
— *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene 2, lines 1-84 by William Shakespeare