



50
Years

INDIANA REPERTORY THEATRE

Shakespeare's Will

by Vern Thiessen

March 15 – April 16, 2023
on the IRT Upperstage

STUDY GUIDE

Indiana Repertory Theatre
140 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Janet Allen, Margot Lacy Eccles
Executive Artistic Director
Suzanne Sweeney, Managing Director

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SHAKESPEARE'S WILL

BY VERN THIESSEN

Her husband is the most famous man in literary history. She has been cloaked in silence and invisibility. Now Anne Hathaway tells her side of the story, full of love and loss, secrets and sacrifices. Inspired by what little we know about Anne, this witty and imaginative play creates a surprisingly modern portrait of a proudly imperfect wife and mother: a liberated woman living on her own defiant terms.

Recommended for students in grades 9-12

The performance will last about one hour and thirty minutes, without intermission.

CONTENT ADVISORY

Shakespeare's Will is a one-person play set in Tudor England that contains descriptions of sex in and out of wedlock, anti-Catholic sentiment, bisexuality, menstruation, childbirth, depression, plague, drowning, and drinking alcohol. There is profanity.

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THE STORY OF THE PLAY

In *Shakespeare's Will* by Vern Thiessen, we meet Anne Hathaway as she is coming home from her husband's funeral. She carries Shakespeare's will in her hand, a will that she hasn't yet read. She wonders uncomfortably about why Shakespeare's sister Joan has insisted on coming over later this evening—and what Joan knows about the will.

Anne remembers meeting young Will Shakespeare at the Stratford fair, watching a traveling troupe of actors from the city. She remembers their first time together that night in her father's barn. And she remembers their long talk afterward; learning that Will is 18 to her 26; that he is Catholic; that he likes boys as well as girls. Anne confesses that she likes boys too: "I like the company of lots and lots of men."

Three months later, when Anne discovers she is pregnant, she and Will get married, despite her father's misgivings. Their wedding is a rather slapdash affair, but that night, Will reads to Anne a sonnet he has written for her. Together, they make a vow: "To live our own lives. To treat each other well but allow for our separate desires. To have our secrets but protect what we each hold most dear. It will be our own kind of marriage."

Anne and Will's daughter Susanna is born six months later, followed three years later by twins Judith and Hamnet. Soon thereafter, Will leaves Stratford to join a theatre company in London, first as an actor, then eventually as a playwright. Months turn into years, and the children grow. While Will regularly sends money, Anne and the children see him only occasionally for brief visits to Stratford.

Will buys New Place, the biggest, finest house in Stratford, and Anne and the children have a comfortable life with a beautiful home and two servants and a lovely garden. Anne enjoys her life, keeping home, taking care of her children and her beehives, and enjoying the company of various men while Will is away. Yet she misses her husband.

When the plague comes to Stratford, Anne takes the children to the sea to escape. She remembers her time there as a child, escaping another plague that took the life of her mother.

Back in the present, Anne recalls Will's retirement and his return to Stratford. She thinks about his death just a few days ago. And she finally reads the will, which leads her to ponder the great tragedy of her life. The play ends quietly as Anne returns to the sea, determined to move on with her life.

*Tracy Michelle Arnold in Shakespeare's Will,
directed by Brenda DeVita,
at American Players Theatre, 2012*



THE SHADOWY PRESENCE BEHIND THE CELEBRATED FIGURE

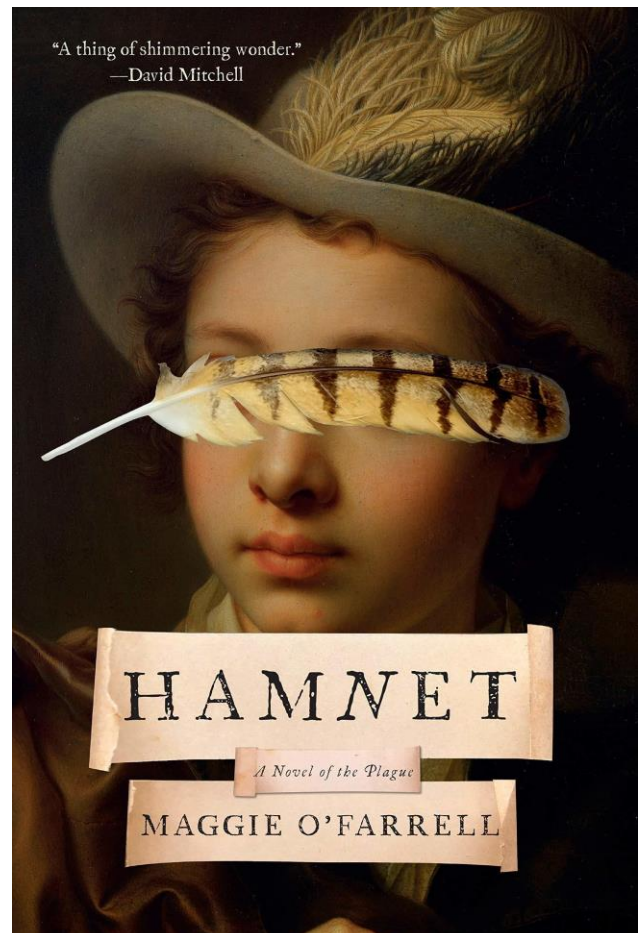
BY JANET ALLEN, MARGOT LACY ECCLES ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

“She grows up with a hidden, private flame inside her: it licks at her, warms her, warns her. You need to get away, the flame tells her. You must.”

—*Hamnet, A Novel of the Plague* by Maggie O’Farrell

I, along with millions of other Shakespeare addicts, ran to purchase Maggie O’Farrell’s *Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague* when it was first published in March 2020. We were seeking to experience and explore this remarkable fiction writer’s take on Shakespeare’s life, and in particular her chronicle of the death of his son Hamnet at age 11 in the plague of 1596. Of course, we didn’t know yet that another plague was headed our way, making O’Farrell’s powerful piece of historical fiction eerily prescient.

I read it hungrily in the spring of 2020 as, locked in our homes, we wondered what the future would bring. I experienced in all too similar a way the world that Shakespeare’s wife Anne Hathaway (called Agnes in the novel) experienced in Stratford-upon-Avon in that plague year. She is mono-focused on preserving the health of her three children; her husband, trapped by the plague in London, is an unhelpful and distant, if potent, presence. Anne loses her battle to save their children: their only son, Hamnet, dies. (Is this departed son the inspiration for Shakespeare’s later masterwork *Hamlet*? We’ll never really know.) I suspect that anyone with children, and perhaps many without, were struck deeply by this book in our first plague year, before the vaccines, when survival was a daily cause of fear. For those of us with an affinity to anything Shakespearean, this book has become a very visceral, memorable, telling of Shakespeare’s relationship to his family, and particularly, an unforgettable portrait of his wife.



This novel, which went on to win numerous prizes for its monumental brilliance, brought back to me the many other attempts that writers have made to capture something of Anne Hathaway's shadowy presence behind the celebrated figure of her husband. Among those writings was this play, *Shakespeare's Will*, which I have long admired. I felt that we, as art makers and audiences, were in a unique time to deeply appreciate Anne's story, as we emerge, or try to emerge, from this worldwide pandemic, knowing more than we'd hoped to of loss and grief. The play is also an examination of how history often minimizes the lives of women, stuck in the daily toil of housemaking, child rearing, and husband obeisance. And of course it also addresses the age-old questions in the Shakespeare story itself: How did a young man come to marry a woman eight years his senior, only to leave her for most of his adult life to care for their three children alone while he pursued an apparently absurd life as an actor and playwright?



*Tracy Michelle Arnold in Shakespeare's Will,
directed by Brenda DeVita,
at American Players Theatre, 2012*

We have the great good fortune to have snared the talents of two remarkable women to make this creative journey in IRT's 50th anniversary season: actor Tracy Michelle Arnold, who luminously played Nora in our production of *A Doll's House Part 2* a number of years ago, returns to play Anne Hathaway. Tracy took on this role eleven years ago at her home theatre, American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin, and returns to it now with the new insights that age and experience bring. Directing her is Brenda DeVita, artistic director at American Players Theatre, who directed Tracy in that earlier production. Brenda's time with us is a gift. As a hard-working artistic director, it's difficult for her to be away from her many day-to-day obligations; but I couldn't be more delighted to have her spend some time here in my final season, making a piece of art that is dear to her heart. And you should all put APT on your theatre-going radar: they make absolutely astonishingly great work deep in the woods of Wisconsin, one of my favorite summer destinations.

There is no doubt that this play lifts the role of women in history and attempts to fill in the blanks that history traditionally leaves around the famous men who have made the "his" in "history" have meaning. But the fact that it does it with great artistry and remarkable depth is what makes it worthy theatre. I hope you will come away moved and inspired.

GRACE

BY BRENDA DEVITA, DIRECTOR

There are nine known facts about Anne Hathaway. Just nine. So researching this woman was fascinating because all I knew about her was her name. I found out pretty quickly why that was: there's nothing out there about Anne Hathaway. It's all about William Shakespeare.

Of course, history is built on the facts we can piece together, plus a lot of supposition to be shaped into something that sounds like truth. In Anne's case, she is often maligned by historians (who were mostly men, writing about men, for men). So her "truth" became that she was an older woman who trapped this young, intelligent, special boy by getting pregnant and marrying him. (Because everyone wants to marry a poor playwright with no prospects, right?)

Remember ... Shakespeare wasn't SHAKESPEARE when she met him.

Shakespeare's Will weaves those nine facts into a fully realized Anne Hathaway. A beautiful, poetic story about a brave woman in honest contemplation of her life's choices. Anne owns the choices she's made. Not proud of every choice but, more importantly, proud of the way she has handled them: the good ones and the bad.

One reason we tell stories, I believe, is that we long for inspiration from those who get through this thing called life with a modicum of grace. Anne is graceful. Not with a perfected, calm angel-like grace, but an honest, steely, truthful kind of grace. A grace that most of us can understand—can aspire to.

I flatter myself to find myself in her. That is what good art does for us. I do see the parallels: independent, mother, wife of an artist ... minus the grace, at times, I fear. And the play speaks to me on that very personal level. Challenges me—challenges us—to determinedly scour our lives, our choices, our actions with fierce honesty ... and accept ourselves.

*Tracy Michelle Arnold
in Shakespeare's Will,
directed by Brenda DeVita,
at American Players Theatre,
2012.*



EPIGRAPH

(noun) a short quotation at the beginning of a book, intended to suggest its theme

**No Book has yet been written
in praise of a woman who
let her husband & children
Starve or Suffer while she
Invented even the most useful
things, or wrote books,
or expressed herself in art,
or evolved philosophic systems.**

—ANNA GARLIN SPENCER



*Anna Garlin Spencer (1851–1931) was an educator, feminist, and Unitarian minister—the first woman ordained in Rhode Island. The quote is from her 1913 book *Woman's Share in Social Culture*.*

**Love rests on no foundation
It is an endless ocean,
with no beginning or end.
Imagine,
a suspended ocean,
riding on a cushion of ancient secrets.
All souls have drowned in it,
and now dwell there.
One drop of that ocean is hope,
and the rest is fear.**

—MOWLANA JALALUDDIN RUMI



Rumi (1207-1273) was a Persian poet, legal scholar, theologian, and mystic. He is considered one of the most widely read and popular poets throughout the world.

**I believe that what woman resents is not so
much giving herself in pieces as giving herself
purposelessly.**

—ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH

Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906–2001) was a National Book Award-winning non-fiction writer, novelist, and poet. In 1930 she became the first woman to receive a U.S. glider pilot license. Throughout the early 1930s, she served as radio operator and copilot to her husband, famed aviator Charles Lindbergh.



ANNE HATHAWAY

Anne Hathaway was born in 1556, the eldest of eight children. Her father was a Protestant yeoman sheep farmer in the village of Shottery, about a mile east of Stratford-upon-Avon. Her mother, whose name is unknown, died some time during Anne's youth. Anne married William Shakespeare in November 1582 when she was 26 and he was 18. They lived with his parents in Stratford.

Six months after their wedding, Anne and William's daughter Susanna was born. Twins Judith and Hamnet were born in 1585. Some time in the late 1580s, Shakespeare left Stratford to become an actor and playwright in London. For the next 25 to 30 years he regularly sent money home to Anne. In 1597 he bought New Place, the biggest house in Stratford, for the family to live in. But he himself only occasionally returned to Stratford for brief visits.

Anne and William's son Hamnet died at the age of 11 of unknown causes. Susanna married a doctor, John Hall, in 1607. Judith married Thomas Quiney, a vintner, in February 1616, just two months before her father died.

Shakespeare died in Stratford in 1616. Anne died in 1623, age 67. She was buried beside her husband in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.

This drawing, presumed to have been traced from a lost painting, is thought by some to be a portrait of Anne Hathaway.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare was born in 1564. His father was a glove maker who became High Bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon, a position similar to our mayor, but soon after fell on hard times. His mother, Mary Arden, was from a wealthy local Catholic family.

Shakespeare is assumed to have attended Stratford's highly regarded grammar school. He did not attend university, probably due to his father's poor finances; he is thought by some historians to have worked as a tutor. At some point in the late 1580s, he left his wife and children in Stratford to become an actor and playwright in London. There he wrote 38 plays, several narrative poems, and more than 150 sonnets, becoming the most popular playwright in London's highly competitive theatrical world.



Shakespeare's sonnets are often cited as evidence of his bisexuality. One hundred twenty-six of them are love poems addressed to a young man known as the "Fair Lord" or "Fair Youth," often assumed to be the same person as the "Mr W. H." to whom the sonnets are dedicated. Another 26 are addressed to a "Dark Lady."

Shakespeare died in 1616 and was buried in Stratford. A collected edition of his plays was published in 1623, preserving his work for posterity.

This painting is thought to be the only portrait of William Shakespeare painted during his lifetime.

PEOPLE IN THE PLAY

Most of the people mentioned in the play are actual historic figures, although little is known about many of them.

ANNE & WILL'S FAMILIES

RICHARD HATHAWAY— ANNE'S FATHER

Anne's father, Richard Hathaway (died 1581), was a staunchly Protestant yeoman sheep farmer in the village of Shottery, located about a mile east of Stratford. (A yeoman farmer is one who farms land that he owns. At this time, the word yeoman indicated a class below the gentry but above the laborers.) Anne's mother's name is unknown, as is the cause of her death.



Anne Hathaway's childhood home in Shottery, near Stratford.

JOHN SHAKESPEARE—WILL'S FATHER

Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare (c.1531–1601), was a glover by trade. He was elected to several municipal offices, serving as an alderman and becoming bailiff (chief magistrate of the town council) and mayor of Stratford in 1568. In the 1570s, however, he fell on hard times. He failed to attend council meetings and thus lost his position as an alderman. He stayed away from Church services for fear of being arrested for debt. He was prosecuted for usury and for illegal dealing in wool. In 1576, John Shakespeare withdrew from public life in Stratford.

MARY ARDEN—WILL'S MOTHER

Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden (c.1537–1608), was born into a wealthy, prominent Warwickshire family with a notable history. Together, she and John Shakespeare had eight children, three of whom died in childhood.

JOAN SHAKESPEARE—WILL'S SISTER

Joan Shakespeare (1569–1646), William Shakespeare's sister, was five years younger than her brother and 13 years younger than Anne. Joan married a hatter named William Hart with whom she had four children. Her husband died just a week before Shakespeare died. She is the only member of the Shakespeare family whose known descendants continue down to the present day. Joan was 47 at Shakespeare's death.

SUSANNA SHAKESPEARE—ANNE & WILL'S DAUGHTER

Susanna Shakespeare (1583–1649) was the oldest child of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway, and the older sister of twins Judith and Hamnet Shakespeare. Susanna was baptized on May 26, 1583, six months after her parents' wedding in November 1582. She married John Hall, a prominent local physician, in 1607.

JUDITH SHAKESPEARE—ANNE & WILL'S DAUGHTER

Judith Shakespeare and her twin brother Hamnet were baptized on February 2, 1585. Judith Shakespeare (1585–1662) married Thomas Quiney, a Stratford vintner, in February 1616. At the time of the wedding, Quiney had recently impregnated another woman who died in childbirth along with the baby a month after his wedding to Judith. It is thought that this may be why Shakespeare altered his will in January and March of that year, just before his own death, to remove Quiney as a beneficiary and to ensure that Judith's inheritance could not go to him.

HAMNET SHAKESPEARE—ANNE & WILL'S SON

Hamnet Shakespeare and his twin sister Judith were baptized on February 2, 1585. Hamnet Shakespeare (1585–1696) died at the age of 11 of unknown causes. At that time in England, one third of children died before the age of ten.

JOHN HALL—SUSANNA'S HUSBAND

Susanna's husband, John Hall (1575–1635), earned his B.A. and M.A. at Queen's College, Cambridge. He became a physician, although he did not hold an English medical degree; it has been speculated that he studied medicine in France. He established a practice in Stratford, where he was the only doctor in the town. He is thought to have had a good relationship with his father-in-law. He was a leading local Puritan.

THOMAS QUINEY—JUDITH'S HUSBAND

Judith married Thomas Quiney, a Stratford vintner, in February 1616 just two months before Shakespeare's death.



BRUNDAGE & NELLY— ANNE'S SERVANTS

Anne would surely have had servants at New Place, the large house that Shakespeare bought in Stratford in 1597, but we don't know how many or their names.

Shakespeare is thought to have been born in this house in Stratford in 1564.

WILL'S LONDON FRIENDS

FRANCIS BACON >

Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount St Alban (1561–1626), was an English philosopher and statesman who served as Attorney General and Lord Chancellor of England. Bacon led the advancement of both natural philosophy and the scientific method. Arguing for the possibility of scientific knowledge based only upon inductive reasoning and careful observation of events in nature, Bacon has been called the father of empiricism. His works remained influential even in the late stages of the Scientific Revolution. For those interested in the Shakespeare Authorship Question—Did the man from Stratford write Shakespeare's plays, or did someone else?—Francis Bacon is perhaps the most popular candidate.



RICHARD BURBAGE <

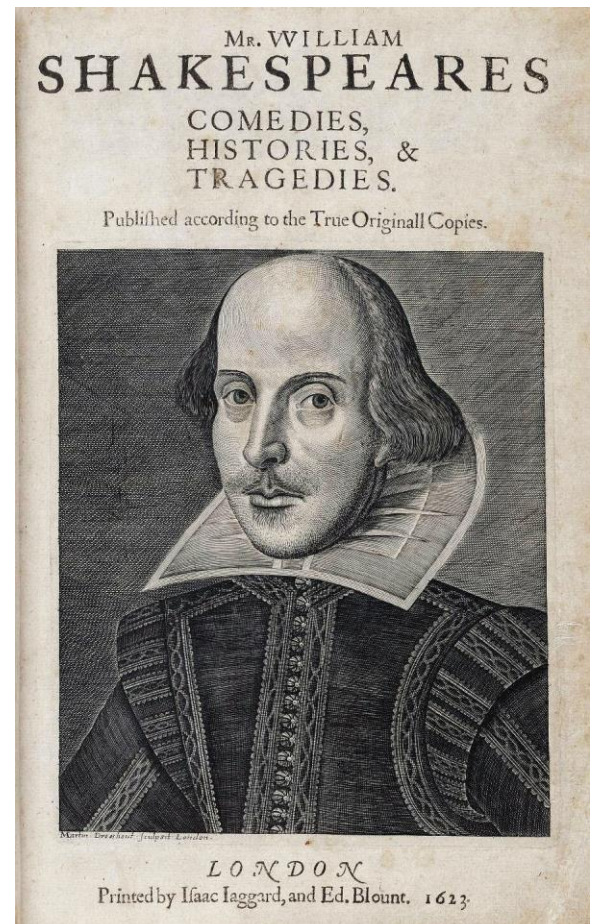
Richard Burbage, (c.1567–1619) was the leading actor in Shakespeare's companies, the Lord Chamberlain's Men and later the King's Men. He was the first actor to play the roles of Richard III, Romeo, Henry V, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and Lear. In his will, Shakespeare left Burbage 26 shillings and 8 pence (about \$325 today) to buy a mourning ring.

HENRY CONDELL

Henry Condell (died 1627) was an actor who, with John Hemings, prepared and oversaw the *First Folio* (1623), the first published collection of Shakespeare's plays. Hemings was an actor in Shakespeare's companies, the Lord Chamberlain's Men and later the King's Men. In his will, Shakespeare left Condell 26 shillings and 8 pence (about \$325 today) to buy a mourning ring.

JOHN HEMINGS

John Hemings (1566–1630) was an actor who, with Henry Condell, prepared and oversaw the *First Folio* (1623), the first published collection of Shakespeare's plays. Hemings was an actor in Shakespeare's companies, the Lord Chamberlain's Men and later the King's Men, and is believed to have been the first actor to play Falstaff. He served as the company's business manager for 25 years. In his will, Shakespeare left Hemings 26 shillings and 8 pence (about \$325 today) to buy a mourning ring.



The First Folio.

JOHN FLETCHER >

John Fletcher (1579–1625) followed Shakespeare as house playwright for the King's Men. He was among the most prolific and influential dramatists of his day; during his lifetime and in the early Restoration, his fame rivaled Shakespeare's. Of his many collaborations, his most famous are with Francis Beaumont (*The Maid's Tragedy*, c.1609) and with Shakespeare himself (*Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *Cardenio*, all c.1613).

**JOHN ROBINSON**

In 1613, as Shakespeare was co-writing his last plays with John Fletcher, he purchased (with a couple of partners) the Blackfriars Gatehouse in London, part of the old Blackfriars Priory. At the time, the Gatehouse was a center for secret Catholic activity and worship. Shakespeare leased the Gatehouse to John Robinson, son of a Catholic gentleman and brother of a Catholic priest. Robinson is known to have previously sheltered at least one Catholic priest in hiding. Presumably Robinson was not merely a tenant, but was intended to be guardian of the Gatehouse's secrets. Robinson visited Shakespeare in Stratford and seems to be the only one of Shakespeare's London friends who witnessed his will.

WILL'S STRATFORD FRIENDS**HAMNET SADLER**

Hamnet Sadler (c.1562–1624) was a baker in Stratford. His wife's name was Judith, and one of their 14 children was named William. Anne and William Shakespeare's twins were named Hamnet and Judith after the Sadlers. Hamnet was a witness to Shakespeare's will in 1616 and was left 26 shillings and 8 pence (about \$325 today) to buy a mourning ring.

JULYUS SHAW

Julyus Shaw was a witness to Shakespeare's will. His Stratford home is today the site of the Chaucer Head Bookshop.

ROBERT WHATTCOTT

Robert Whattcott was a witness to Shakespeare's will.

*Holy Trinity Church in Stratford,
where Shakespeare is buried.*



LIFE IN STRATFORD

STRATFORD-UPON AVON

In the 1500s, Stratford-upon-Avon was a market town in the county of Warwickshire, in the West Midlands region of England. It was situated on the River Avon, 91 miles northwest of London. At that time, it had a population of around 2,000, making it a large market town for the era. Located on the edge of the Cotswolds, Stratford was one of the main centers for the processing, marketing, and distribution of sheep and wool. Tanning and glove making were also important industries.

THE YEARLY FAIR

Traditionally, most English towns held at least one fair each year, usually in the summer. A fair could last for one or several days, featuring agricultural shows and traveling performers of all kinds. Plays were put on, military displays were organized, and dances were held. Besides the usual local market vendors, there was the opportunity to buy goods brought in from traveling merchants from across the country and even abroad. Stratford had an annual fair beginning in the 1300s.

THE PLAYERS IN FROM THE CITY

Traveling companies of actors visited Stratford several times during Shakespeare's youth. Most traveling companies consisted of half a dozen actors with costumes and a few props. They would give several performances of different plays in the local Guild Hall or on the village green.

BAD LUCK TO MARRY AFTER THE CLOCK STRIKES NOON

Today it is considered bad luck to marry on the hour; if the wedding is scheduled on the half hour, it will take place while the minute hand is moving up. Prior to the development of the minute hand around 1690, the hour hand, the only hand, would have moved up before noon and down after noon.

NEW PLACE

In 1597, Shakespeare bought a house in Stratford known as New Place, so named because it was built on the site of a 200-year-old previous building. The largest house in Stratford at the time, it was built of timber and brick (then an innovation in Stratford). It had ten fireplaces, five gables, and grounds large enough to incorporate two barns and an orchard. It was in this house that Shakespeare died. In his will, he left the house to his daughter, Susanna.

HOLY DAYS

The 1500s was the time in England when holy days began to expand from being solely devoted to worship to including time for relaxation and fun, such as village fairs and family celebrations.

WHEN THE FEVER FETCHED A THIRD OF THE TOWN

Between July 1564, three months after Shakespeare was born, and January 1565, more than 200 people died of plague in Stratford.

SONNET 145

In *Shakespeare's Will*, on Anne and Will's wedding night, he reads to her a sonnet he has written for her. Although it is not known when Sonnet 145 was written, it is unusual among Shakespeare's sonnets in that it is written in tetrameter (four beats per line) rather than the usual pentameter (five beats). Some scholars consider this to be among Shakespeare's poorer sonnets; some go so far as to suggest that he did not in fact write it, or that he wrote it while still young and relatively unskilled. Some feel that the "hate away" phrase suggests the sonnet is about Anne Hathaway, perhaps another reason to suggest it is from his early years before he moved to London.

Those lips that Love's own hand did make
 Breathed forth the sound that said "I hate"
 To me that languished for her sake;
 But when she saw my woeful state,
 Straight in her heart did mercy come,
 Chiding that tongue that ever sweet
 Was used in giving gentle doom,
 And taught it thus anew to greet:
 "I hate" she altered with an end
 That followed it as gentle day
 Doth follow night, who, like a fiend,
 From heaven to hell is flown away.
 "I hate" from hate away she threw,
 And saved my life, saying "not you."

As an exercise, read the poem carefully and rewrite it in your own words, line by line. Try to figure out each phrase and make the meaning clear.

SHAKESPEARE'S CATHOLICISM

William Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, was from a prominent Catholic family, and Shakespeare is presumed to have been raised in that faith. Being a Catholic in England in the 1500s was fraught with challenges in a constantly shifting landscape of politics vs. religion.



Like the rest of Europe, England had been a Catholic nation from the time of the Middle Ages. In the early 1500s, Martin Luther's Reformation ideas were known in England, but Protestants were a religious minority and heretics under the law. Then in 1527, Henry VIII requested an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, but Pope Clement VII refused. In response, the English Parliament passed laws abolishing papal authority in England and declaring Henry to be head of the Church of England. As the change was mostly political, made to allow Henry to marry Anne Boleyn, the English Church under Henry VIII continued to maintain Roman Catholic doctrines and sacraments despite the separation from the Pope. With little exception, Henry VIII allowed no changes in church practice during his lifetime. Between 1536 and 1541, however, when the national treasury was low, Henry disbanded the Catholic monasteries, priories, convents, and friaries throughout the kingdom, expropriating their income and disposing of their assets, with the money going to the Crown.

Henry VIII

Edward VI

Henry died in 1547, and his nine-year-old son Edward became King. During Edward VI's reign, the Church of England became markedly more Protestant, largely along lines laid down by the powerful Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. Edward died in 1553 at the age of only 15, and after Lady Jane Grey's nine-day reign, Edward's sister Mary was proclaimed Queen. Mary I restored Roman Catholicism to England and saw that the nation returned to papal jurisdiction. During Mary's five-year reign, more than 280 Protestant dissenters were burned at the stake, earning her the nickname "Bloody Mary." When Mary died in 1558, her staunchly Protestant sister Elizabeth became Queen, and Reformation once more became the law of the land.



Elizabeth I was at first relatively tolerant of those who continued to practice Catholicism. But during the 1570s, Catholic rulers in Europe began to challenge Elizabeth's legitimacy as Queen, and death threats against her were blamed on Catholic hardliners. In 1581 a law was passed that made it high treason to be reconciled to "the Romish religion." The celebration of Mass was prohibited, and the penalty for not attending the Anglican service was substantially increased.

Thus, when Anne Hathaway met William Shakespeare in 1582, being Catholic was illegal and dangerous. Prior to their meeting, Shakespeare is thought by some historians to have been employed as a tutor by the Houghton family in Lancashire, 140 miles north of Stratford. A licensed schoolmaster would have been required to be certified as Protestant by the local bishop. For the Houghtons, a wealthy Catholic family harboring illegal priests and banned books, a bright 16-year-old Catholic boy, unable to attend university and needing a job because of his father's financial decline, would have been just what was wanted.



Mary I



Elizabeth I

Although it is not known how actively Shakespeare practiced his faith, there is evidence that he was not entirely a lapsed Catholic. In 1613, as he was co-writing his last plays with John Fletcher, he purchased (with a couple of partners) the Blackfriars Gatehouse in London, part of the old Blackfriars Priory. At the time, the Gatehouse was a center for secret Catholic activity and worship. Shakespeare leased the Gatehouse to John Robinson, son of a Catholic gentleman and brother of a Catholic priest. Robinson is known to have previously sheltered at least one Catholic priest in hiding. Presumably Robinson was intended to be guardian of the Gatehouse's secrets. And Robinson was not just a tenant; he visited Shakespeare in Stratford and seems to be the only one of Shakespeare's London friends who witnessed his will.

TERMINOLOGY OF THE WILL

MARRIAGE PORTION

A marriage portion, or dowry, is the transfer of parental property to a daughter at her marriage rather than at her parents' death. A dowry may provide an element of financial security in widowhood or against a negligent husband, and may eventually go to provide for her children.

CHATTEL

Tangible, movable personal property (as opposed to real estate).

LEASES

Property leased out for others to use (as opposed to used by the owner for their own residence).

PLATE

In this context, gold, silver, pewter, or other items of tableware, cutlery, drinking ware, candlesticks, vases, jugs, trays, and other valuable pieces of metalwork.

26 SHILLINGS AND 8 PENCE A PIECE TO BUY THEM ALL RINGS

About \$325 today. Remembrance rings were a common bequest at the time.

20 POUNDS

About \$4800 today.

MY SECOND BEST BED

Because Shakespeare specified in his will that Anne should receive only his “second best bed,” many scholars have assumed that their marriage was an unhappy one. Others have suggested that, because in most Elizabethan homes the best bed would have been the guest bed, Shakespeare left Anne their marriage bed as a sentimental gesture. It must be noted that, although Shakespeare left the Stratford house (New Place) and all its contents (except the bed) to his daughter Susanna, Anne lived there with Susanna and her family for the rest of her life—a very typical situation for that era, and one that Shakespeare would surely have anticipated.

WITH THE FURNITURE

In this context, furniture means the (mostly cloth) furnishings of the bed: the mattress, pillows, sheets, blankets, bed-curtains, etc.

This bed, part of the furnishings at the Anne Hathaway Cottage in Stratford, is not the original bed mentioned in the will, but it is similar to what that bed would have been.



GRIEF

Loss of a child or a sibling, as is seen in *Shakespeare's Will*, can be one of the most traumatic events a person might experience. Here are some resources:

The Dougy Center has toolkits, activities, and information for various age groups who are dealing with the loss of a loved one:

- [Grief Resources for Kids](#)
- [Grief Resources for Teens](#)
- [Grief Resources for Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [Resources for School Personnel](#)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Chat Available): 1.800.273.8255

Local Grief Resources:

- [Riley Children's Health Bereavement Services](#): 317.963.0829
- [Brooke's Place](#) provides peer support groups, individual therapy, and summer camps for children and young adults dealing with grief.

Indiana Donor Network:

- [Website Resources and Grief Readings](#)
- [Support Groups and Resources](#) from across the state

[SUDC Foundation](#)

Support and resources after the loss of a child to sudden unexpected death.

[The Compassionate Friends](#) –

Support group for families who have lost a child



INDIANA ACADEMIC STANDARDS

ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Seeing *Shakespeare's Will* at the Indiana Repertory Theatre is a great way to help make connections for students and facilitate their understanding of a text. Some key literature standards to consider on your trip would be:

READING LITERATURE

- RL.1 Read a variety of literature within a range of complexity appropriate for one's grade
- RL.2 Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by identifying, describing, and making inferences about literary elements and themes
- RL.3 Build comprehension and appreciation of literature, using knowledge of literary structure, and point of view
- RL.4 Build comprehension and appreciation of literary elements and themes and analyze how sensory tools impact meaning

READING--VOCABULARY

- RV.1 Build and apply vocabulary using various strategies and sources
- RV.2 Use strategies to determine and clarify words and understand their relationship
- RV.3 Build appreciation and understanding of literature and nonfiction texts by determining or clarifying the meaning of words and their uses

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- SL.1 Develop and apply effective communication skills through speaking and active listening
- SL.3 Develop and apply active listening and interpretation skills using various strategies

MEDIA LITERACY

- ML.1 Develop an understanding of media and the roles and purposes of media
- ML.2 Recognize the purpose of media and the ways in which media can have influences

THEATRE CREATING

- TH.Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

THEATRE RESPONDING

- TH.Re.7 Perceive and analyze artistic work
- TH.Re.8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- TH.Re.9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

THEATRE CONNECTING

- TH.Cn.10 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- TH.Cn.11 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

LANGUAGE HISTORY

- LH.3 Build understanding of history/social studies texts, using knowledge, structural organization, and author's purpose

ETHNIC STUDIES

- ES.1 Cultural Self-Awareness
- ES.2 Cultural Histories within the United States Context and Abroad
- ES.4 Historical and Contemporary Contributions

GEOGRAPHY AND WORLD HISTORY

- GHW.9 Students examine the physical and human geographic factors associated with examples of how humans interact with the environment, such as deforestation, natural hazards and the spread of diseases, and the regional and global consequences of these interactions.

WORLD HISTORY

- WH.4.2 Analyze the factors that led to the rise and spread of the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter-Reformation, as well as reforming movements in other religions, including the wars of religion.
- WH.5.2 Explain the key ideas of the Enlightenment in European history and describe its impact upon political and religious thought and culture in Europe and the Americas including the foundation of American government.

Anne Hathaway's childhood home in Shottery, near Stratford.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEFORE SEEING THE PLAY

What play(s) by William Shakespeare have you seen or read? What can the play(s) you've experienced tell you about him and his life?

What do you know about William Shakespeare's life? What do you know about his wife, Anne Hathaway?

Have you ever seen a one-person play? How do you expect the experience might be different from seeing a play with more actors? How do you imagine a single actor might portray multiple characters?

AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

What are some significant things you learned about Shakespeare's life that you did not know before seeing this play? Was anything you learned about him surprising or even shocking to you? Did anything you learned change your opinion of him?

What did you learn in the play about life for Elizabethan women?

What does the play gain from featuring only one character? What does it lose? How does this form affect the story?

What is Anne's attitude towards her marriage? What does this play tell us about marriage in general?

In the play, we see Anne's viewpoint about her family. What do you imagine Will's viewpoint might be? What might the children—Susannah, Judith, and Hamnet—have to say about their parents?

How does Anne's attitude toward Will change throughout the play?

How does Anne feel about her children? What does this play say about being a mother?

How does Anne feel about her life in general? Evaluate the different points in her life she travels through.

What are some elements about the will itself that stuck out to you? Why?

WRITING PROMPTS

WRITE A LETTER

Write a letter from either Anne or Will to their spouse, or to one of their children. Or write a letter from one of the children to one of their parents. If writing from parent to child, perhaps you might write a letter of advice and wishes and hopes that a parent would have for their child. If writing from child to parent, perhaps you might seek advice, ask questions, tell about your hopes and dreams.

WRITE A SONNET

Research sonnet form. Here is a good website:

<https://nosweatshakespeare.com/sonnets/how-to-write-a-sonnet/>

Here are the basics:

14 lines

rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG

10 syllables per line, iambic pentameter

Write a sonnet from Anne's point of view. She might talk about anything—her children, her marriage, another man—but choose one subject to focus on.

WRITE A REVIEW

Write a review of the play. A well-rounded review includes your opinion of the theatrical aspects— scenery, lights, costumes, sound, direction, acting—as well as your impressions of the script and the impact of the story and/or themes and the overall production. What moments made an impression? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors performance of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? To share your reviews with others, send to:

education@irtlive.com



ACTIVITIES

SOCRATIC SEMINAR

A Socratic seminar is a discussion in which students take part in an open ended dialogue. The teacher will ask a question and the students will answer the question, using the material studied. The question that you begin the dialogue with may vary depending on your focus of study, it but should be open-ended and provide material for thought.

Some potential prompts for *Shakespeare's Will* are as follows:

How might this play have been different if it had been from someone else's point of view instead of Anne's? For example, Will's point of view? Or one of their children?

What do you think the will itself can tell us about Shakespeare? About Anne? About their relationship and their children?

The first question will be asked by the teacher, and the students will lead the rest of the discussion. This is a chance for students to explore the topic in depth. As part of this exercise, students are asked to bring their own questions to the discussion. Be sure to allow time for some of those points to be discussed. Review the guidelines below with your students before they begin.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN A SOCRATIC SEMINAR

Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. A seminar is not a test of memory. Your goal is to understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the text.

It's okay to "pass" occasionally when asked to contribute—but not every time.

It's okay to be confused at the start of a statement or idea. If you don't understand what someone is saying, ask them to explain further.

Stay on the topic currently being discussed. If another idea comes to your mind, make a note about it so that you can come back to it later.

Allow one another to take turns while you speak, versus raising your hand.

Listen carefully to what everyone has to say. Respect others; you may disagree with their points or opinions, but the seminar is for discussion, not argument.

Speak up so that everyone can hear you.

Talk to the rest of your class, not just to the leader or teacher.

FAMILY TREE

Create a family tree that includes both blood relatives and people that you would consider family, regardless of biological relation. Try to cover as many generations as you can— you will probably need to do research and talk to other family members. When researching your family heritage, try to think about how this history continues to be relevant to your life today. Does learning about your family’s past make you feel more connected to them, or does it perhaps raise more questions? Why is it important to remember your heritage and be knowledgeable about your family’s past?

When the class comes back together, present your family tree and outline the steps that each generation took throughout their life. Maybe they moved from a different state or country, maybe they adopted children, maybe they remarried. If there are any people in your family tree who aren’t necessarily blood related, explain how you know them and why they feel like family to you.

DEBATE

A central element in the story of *Shakespeare’s Will* is the fact that Shakespeare lived most of his adult life away from his wife and children. Most people today would consider this arrangement to be a very large sacrifice to make for a career. Is it worth it? How do we weigh the importance of career against family? On the career side, consider issues of personal fulfillment as well as financial support. On the family side, consider both spousal relationships and parent-child relationships. Assign one half of the class to argue for career and the other half to argue for family. The students can host this debate in a variety of ways: a formal debate, a rap battle, a mock trial, or even a dance-off. Maybe they just hold a group conversation. Whatever the method, have both sides plead their case.

MAKE ART

William Shakespeare devoted his life to writing plays and poetry—making art. Create a song, poem, play, story, drawing, or some other work of art that represents something important in your life— something that guides you or inspires you. It can be anything, from a family member to a passion of yours or even a character that you like.

ACT OUT SCENES WITH CLASSMATES

Put students into small groups. Either choose a scene from the play for them, or have them choose a scene, and have them act out a scene from the play. Ask the students to be purposeful in their actions and have justification behind the choices they make. After performing their scene, have the students discuss their choices, what was effective, and what might be done differently. Perform the scene a second time, and then compare and contrast the two performances.



BLUE DYE

The color blue is integral to the design for this production. In the 15th century this color was difficult to produce. Research the methods of dyeing fabric blue using both woad and indigo, then try your hand at dyeing. How do different fabrics, material of dye pots, and/or mordents effect the color? What does the color blue symbolize for you? If you were designing the production what color would you choose? Create a mood board exploring your own color choices.

MAKE YOUR BED

For this production the bed is the main prop on the stage, and it is used extensively throughout the play. The prop shop had to build a piece that would look appropriate, but be safe for the actor to climb on. Build a model of the bed, and do stress tests to see if it will hold weight and also not flip if extra weight is applied to one end or the other. This web site using bridge design may help you get started with your plan: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stem/curriculum/bridgeup/forces2/index.html> . Do you think the bed was an effective prop? What would you use if you were designing the show? How would you ensure the actor's safety?

DEBATE THE SOLAR SYSTEM

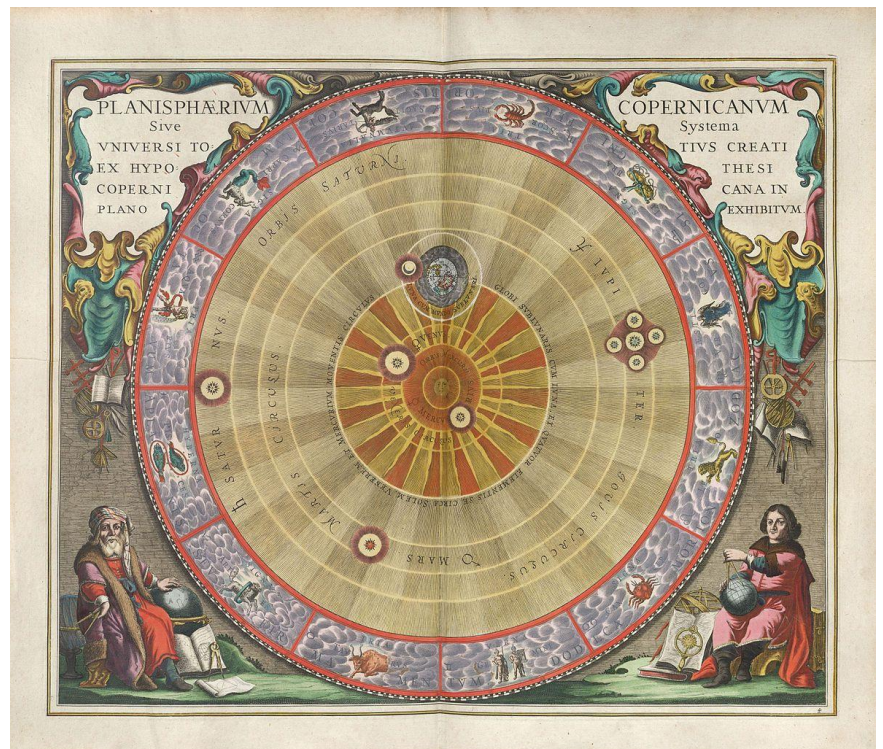
During Anne's and Will's lives, Europe was in the midst of what would later be referred to as "the Scientific Revolution." Natural philosophers debated the works of Copernicus and Galileo, who posited alternatives to the medieval cosmology that was still common belief. Research the competing views of the solar system and divide into teams. Pretending you live in 1600, each team should debate their view of cosmology and why they believe it is the correct view.

Here is an excellent article for background information:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/was-shakespeare-aware-scientific-discoveries-his-time-180951198/>

WORLD MAP

Exploration of the Earth expanded during the time period of the play as well. Draw a map of what the English thought the world looked like in 1556 when Anne Hathaway was born, and then another in 1623 when she died. How did people believe the world had changed in that time?



RESOURCES

BOOKS

Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell

Shakespeare's Wife by Germaine Greer

Shakespeare's Family by Kate Emery Pogue

The Secret Confessions of Anne Hathaway
by Arliss Ryan

The Women of Shakespeare's Family
by Mary Rose

*Women of Will: The Remarkable Evolution
of Shakespeare's Female Characters*
by Tina Packer

*Will in the World: How Shakespeare
Became Shakespeare*
by Stephen Greenblatt

*Soul of the Age: The Life, Mind and World of
William Shakespeare* by Jonathan Bate.

Shakespeare: The World as a Stage
(Eminent Lives) by Bill Bryson.

FILMS

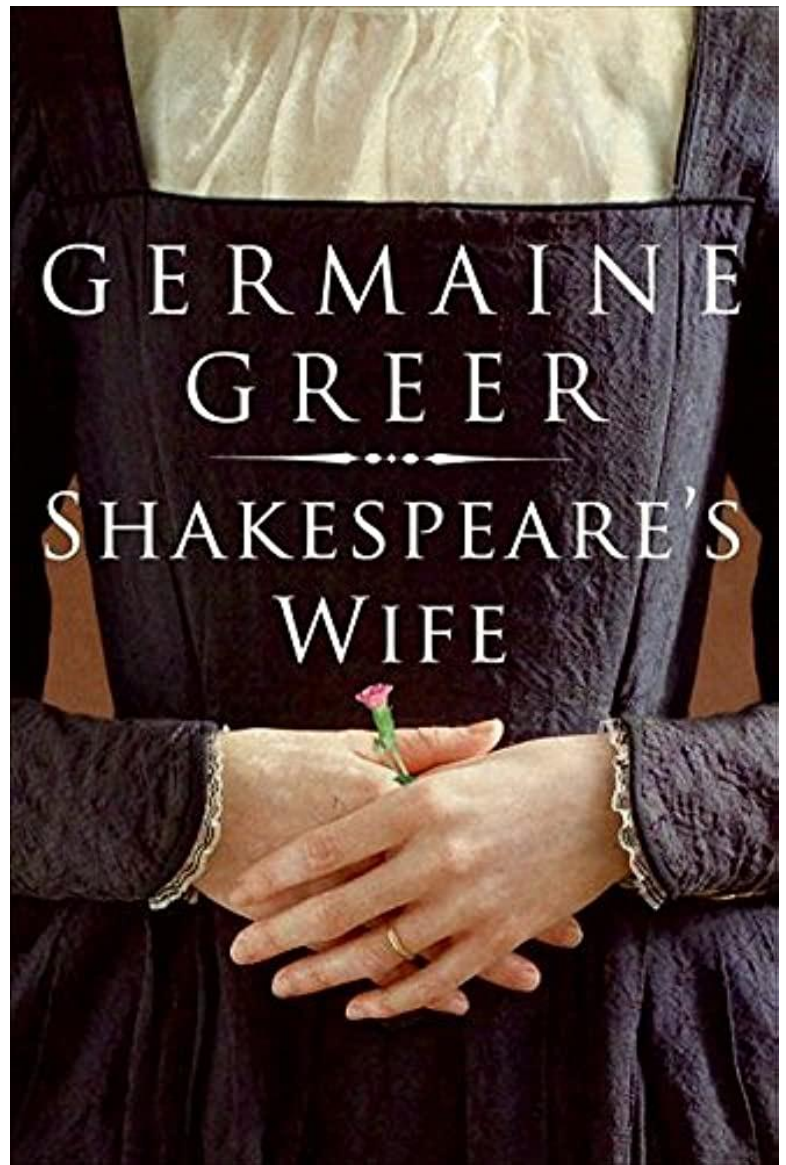
Anne Hathaway is featured as a character in each of these films:

All Is True, 2019. Directed by Kenneth Branagh. Stars Kenneth Branagh, Ian McKellen, and Judi Dench. Historical fiction following the last few years of Shakespeare's life.

A Waste of Shame, 2005. Directed by John McKay. A fiction film about Shakespeare and his sonnets.

Shakespeare in Love, 1998. Directed by John Madden. Stars Gwyneth Paltrow, Joseph Fiennes, Geoffrey Rush, Colin Firth, Ben Affleck, Judi Dench.

Upstart Crow (BBC TV series) about the writing and rehearsals of *Romeo and Juliet*.



VIDEOS

Crash Course, Shakespeare

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS2ndY5WJXA>

Life and Times of Shakespeare

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qafnuBH8KPs>

A&E Shakespeare Doc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITc13WnBWX4>

Mini Doc about Anne Hathaway

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=einw_93aevM



Shakespeare's Globe in London.

WEBSITES

Webpage about Shakespeare's family

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespepedia/william-shakespeare/william-shakespeares-family/>

Webpage about Anne Hathaway

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespepedia/william-shakespeare/william-shakespeares-family/anne-hathaway/>

Webpage giving insight into Anne and William's marriage

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespepedia/william-shakespeare/shakespeares-wife-and-marriage/>

Shakespeare's family tree-

<https://nosweatshakespeare.com/resources/family/>

Webpage about Shakespeare's family

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/tudor/the-shakespeare-family-saga/>

Webpage about Anne Hathaway

<https://www.panmacmillan.com/blogs/history/anne-hathaway-shakespeares-wife>

Webpage about Shakespeare's children

<https://adoseofdavidmitchell.wordpress.com/2018/11/07/shakespeares-children-35-factson-susanna-judith-hamnet/>

Webpage about Shakespeare's children

<https://www.literarygenius.info/children-william-shakespeare.htm>

William Shakespeare's will

<https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/william-shakespeares-last-will-and-testament-original-copy-including-three#:~:text=Shakespeare%20left%20the%20bulk%20of,refers%20to%20as%20his%20niece.>

Webpage discussing Shakespeare's will

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4YGG7k013n4bhlpFjqFy2dX/what-will-s-willtells-us-about-shakespeare>

Webpage discussing Shakespeare's will

<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shakespeares-will-considered-too-curiously/>

Shakespeare's Globe in London, opened in 1997.

It is a recreation of the 1599 Globe Theatre, located about 750 feet from the site of the original.



GLOSSARY

anon

The word *anon* is an ambiguous term that might mean soon, shortly, or later.

armada

An armada is a fleet of ships. In 1588, when Hamnet was three, the great Spanish Armada sailed against England and were defeated by the smaller but more nimble English fleet.

gelding

A gelding is a castrated male horse. Castration makes a male horse calmer and better-behaved, quieter, gentler, and generally more suitable as an everyday working animal.

Jonah

The book of Jonah is found in the Old Testament of the Bible. In the book, Jonah tries to hide from God. During a storm at sea, Jonah is cast overboard, where he is swallowed by a giant fish. Inside the fish he prays for forgiveness, and he eventually is cast on shore.

lye

Lye is a strong chemical, traditionally derived from wood ashes, that was used in making soap.

Madeira

Madeira is a fortified wine made on the Portuguese Madeira Islands, off the coast of Africa. Madeira is produced in a variety of styles ranging from dry wines that can be consumed on their own, such as an apéritif, to sweet wines usually consumed with dessert.

papist

The word “papist” is a pejorative English term for a Catholic, one who supports the Pope.

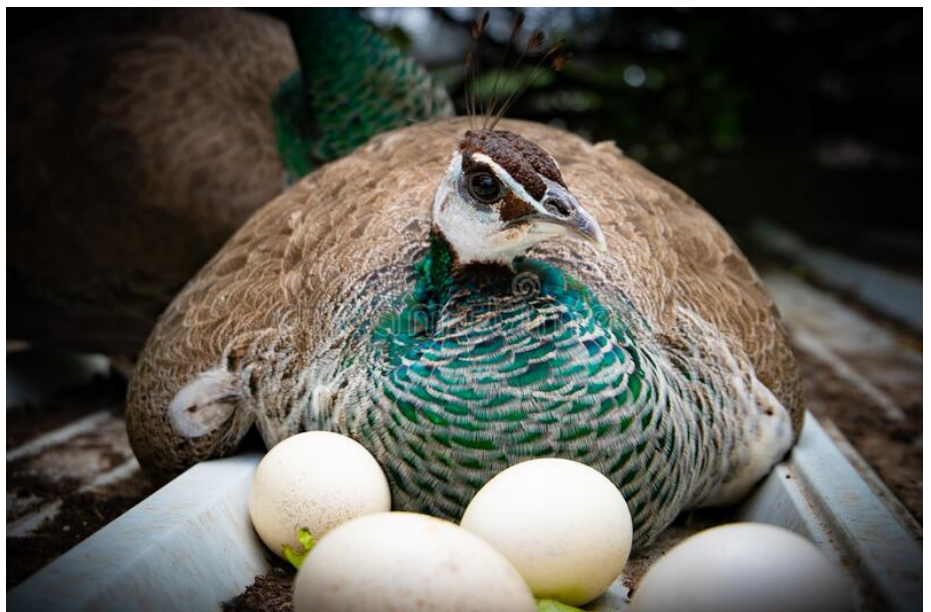
Peacocks

>

Peacocks have long been kept as farm animals. Their eggs are three times the size of chicken eggs, and their flesh is similar to chicken.

pigeons

Pigeons have long been kept as farm animals. Their eggs are smaller than chicken eggs. Pigeons raised for eating are usually referred to as squab.



poppet

In Great Britain, the word *poppet* refers to a young child (especially a girl) or a doll.

Rushes

>

Rushes are plants that usually grow in wetlands. They resemble grasses and sedges, but they are not related. In early Europe, loose fresh rushes were strewn on the earthen floors of dwellings for cleanliness and insulation. During periods of snow or rain they helped keep the floor dry; during hot weather they helped keep the room cooler.

**sherry**

Sherry is a fortified wine made from white Spanish grapes. The Elizabethan term *sack* refers to sherry.

Sneezewort

>

Sneezewort is a flowering plant that looks something like a white daisy with a yellow center. Its root is used to make a medicinal tea.



THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

You, the audience are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink are not allowed in the building during student matinees.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call; this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.

