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STUDY GUIDE: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Life

Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford upon Avon. He attended grammar school, but did not go to the University. As the eldest son, he should have been apprenticed to his father, but instead, he became a schoolmaster. In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway, and later had one daughter and a twin boy and girl, one of whom died during childhood. In 1588, he went to London, and by 1592 he had established himself as an actor and a playwright. By this time, he had secured a patron, the Earl of Southampton, and was also branching out into poetry. He was associated with the acting company originally known as the Chamberlain's Men. The company later changed its name to the King's Men. They performed at the Globe Theatre, Blackfriars, and frequently performed at the court of Elizabeth I and King James I. Shakespeare lived until 1616 and died in Stratford. Several academics debate his existence, and credit his works to either Sir Francis Bacon, or his patron, the Earl of Southampton.

Works

Shakespeare wrote 38 plays and 154 sonnets, as well as other poetry. Because women were not allowed to act during the time in which he wrote, all the female roles were played by prepubescent boys. Humor was often derived from the fact that a boy was playing a girl dressed like a boy. These roles were called "breeches" roles. In rehearsals, actors were only given their own lines, which accounts for slight discrepancies between published versions of his plays, which were printed well after the performances. The "First Folio" is generally accepted as the volume of works closest to the playwright's original intentions about content and punctuation. His comedies had roots in the Italian style Commedia dell'Arte (which included stock characters, such as overprotective fathers and their maiden wards, and were high on physical comedy); the English masques popularized at the royal court by Ben Jonson and others; and the Roman comedies of Plautus. His tragedies drew much from his contemporaries as well as the Roman playwright Seneca.

Scholars have divided his works into four periods. The first period extends until 1594. At this time, chronicle history plays were popular as were violent tragedies. His tragedies were bloody tales influenced by the works of his Elizabethan predecessor Christopher Marlowe. His history plays from this period include the dynasties of Henry VI and Richard III. His comedies

mock the courtly style that was prevalent at the time. The second period covers 1594 until 1600. During this period, he wrote the histories of Henry IV and Richard II, dynasties that preceded those he had written about earlier. The third period lasted until 1608 during which time he wrote his best tragedies and darker comedies. The fourth period, after 1608, is notable for the fact that his comedies became more hopeful and are considered Romantic Tragedies. Some scholars call these comedies Romances or Tragicomedies. In fact, critics divide Shakespeare's works into four separate genres: Histories, Tragedies, Comedies, and Romances.

Although some passages in Shakespeare's plays are pure prose, much of his work is written in the format of iambic pentameter. This format consists of five poetic feet, each containing two syllables, one of which is stressed, the other which is not. When the final words of the lines don't rhyme, this format is called blank verse. Actors must go through a process of analysis called "scansion" when they go to speak his verse. In order to fit the rhythm of ten syllables, many two-syllable words are "elided" or contracted into one-syllable words. For instance, heaven is pronounced "heav'n," never, becomes "ne'er," and interest might be spoken "int'rest." Often words are expanded to fit the verse. For example, charmed, diseased, or ambition might become "charm-ed, disease-ed, or ambi-ti-on." Occasionally, a line will have 11 syllables. These lines are called feminine endings. Occasionally, a nine-syllable line indicates the need for a pause called a "caesura." Also, one character may conclude another's line of verse. For instance, in the *Tempest*, Prospero says:

"I pray thee, mark me." (Miranda responds,) "Oh, good sir, I do."

In combination, their lines contain 10 syllables. Finally, many words in Shakespeare are difficult to understand because we no longer use them. A glossary of several of these is below.

Glossary of Unfamiliar Words in Shakespeare

Art = are
Beshrew = curse
Bin = been, are
Dam = mother
Doth = contraction meaning does
Hark = listen

Hast = have or has

Honest = chaste

Lo = behold

'Od's = abbreviation for God's, usually an exclamation

Prithee = please

Sith = since

Sooth = truth

Thee & thou = you

Thy & thine = your or yours

Wherefore = why

Withal = with

Dramatic Works & Principal Characters Within Each

Histories

Period 1

Henry VI, part I King Henry VI, Lord Talbot, Joan of Arc, Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York

Henry VI, part II King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York

<u>Henry VI, part III</u> King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, Edward, Prince of Wales, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Richard Nevil, Earl of Warwick

Richard III, Queen Elizabeth, Duke of Buckingham, Lady Anne, George, Duke of Clarence

Period 2

<u>Henry IV, part I</u> King Henry IV, Falstaff, Henry, Prince of Wales (Prince Hal), Henry Percy ("Hotspur")

Henry IV, part II King Henry IV, Falstaff, Henry, Prince of Wales

Henry V King Henry V, Archbishop of Canterbury, Fluellen, Pistol

Richard II King Richard II, Henry Bolingbroke, Edmund of Langley, Duke of York

King John, Philip, Arthur, Duke of Britain, Constance

Period 4

Henry VIII King Henry VIII, Queen Katherine, Cardinal Wolsey, Duke of Buckingham, Anne Boleyn

Tragedies

Period 1

Titus Andronicus Titus of Andronicus, Tamora, Aaron the Moor

Period 2

Julius Caesar Brutus, Cassius, Marc Antony, Caesar, Calpurnia

In this tale of politics, Cassius and Brutus conspire with others to kill Caesar, the Roman leader.

Romeo and Juliet Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio, Tybalt, Friar Laurence, Nurse

Romeo and Juliet are from dueling families: the Montagues and the Capulets, respectively. They fall in love, are wed in secret by Friar Laurence, but must hide their union. Juliet's parents try to wed her to someone else. So, she drinks a special potion that will make her sleep until the wedding is over. She appears dead and is entombed. Romeo goes out to buy a poison to commit suicide by her side, having missed the message that the poison is temporary. He arrives at her tomb and kills himself with the poison. She awakes to find him dead, and kills herself with his dagger.

Period 3

<u>Timon of Athens</u> Timon of Athens, Apemantus, Alcibiades, Flavius

<u>Coriolanus</u> Coriolanus, Tullus Aufidius, Caius Marcius, Menenius Agrippa, Volumnia

<u>Antony and Cleopatra</u> Mark Antony, Cleopatra, Octavius, Caesar

<u>King Lear</u> King Lear, Cordelia, Earl of Gloucester, Edgar, Earl of Kent, Edmund, Duke of Albany, Fool

MacBeth Duncan, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Malcolm, Macduff

In this play, three witches prophesize that MacBeth will become the Scottish king. His wife, Lady MacBeth, persuades him to take an active role in making this happen, and conspires with him to kill Duncan, the King. She is haunted by her guilt throughout the rest of the play. **Hamlet, Prince of Denmark** Hamlet, Ophelia, Laertes, Claudius, Polonius, Gertrude, Ghost

In this play, the ghost of Hamlet's father appears to him and reveals to him that new king, Claudius, killed him in order to claim his kingdom and marry his wife. The ghost entreats him to revenge these acts. Hamlet vacillates throughout the play, contriving to be crazy in order to ascertain the truth of his uncle's guilt.

Othello, The Moor of Venice Othello, Desdemona, Iago, Cassio, Emilia

In this play, the title character is an established general in the army of Venice. His corrupt lieutenant convinces him that his virtuous wife, Desdemona, has been unfaithful, in order to precipitate his downfall. Ultimately, Othello becomes convinced, and strangles her out of jealousy.

Comedies

Period 1

Two Gentlemen of Verona Valentine, Proteus, Julius, Silvia

<u>Love's Labour's Lost</u> King of Navarre, Princess of France, Holofernes, Don Adriano de Armado

The Taming of the Shrew Petruchio, Katherine, Bianca

In this play, Bianca, the youngest daughter cannot wed until her father has married off Katherine, his stubborn shrewish daughter. Petruchio is a rich man who has come to Padua and has already heard of Katherine, her notorious temper, and more importantly, her dowry. They marry. Ultimately, he tames her temperament and her manners improve drastically.

<u>The Comedy of Errors</u> Antipholus of Syracuse, Antipholus of Ephesus, Dromio of Syracuse, Dromio of Ephesus

Period 2

Merry Wives of Windsor Falstaff, Mrs. Page, Mr. Ford

Twelfth Night (or, What You Will) Sir Toby Belch, Viola, Sebastian, Duke Orsino, Olivia Much Ado About Nothing Prince of Arragon, Beatrice, Benedick, Claudio, Hero A Midsummer Night's Dream Hermea, Lysander, Theseus, Helena, Demetrius, Oberon, Titania, Puck, Bottom

The Merchant of Venice Bassanio, Shylock, Antonio, Portia

As You Like It Rosalind, Orlando, Touchstone Jacques

Rosalind is exiled to the country. Her friend, Celia accompanies her. In order to protect them, Rosalind dresses herself in breeches like a man. There, she encounters Orlando, who mistakes her for a man, and is in love with her. She tests him by pretending to be Rosalind and letting him practice wooing her. She also facilitates several other romantic matches. Ultimately, she reveals her true identity and the lovers are united.

Period 3

Measure For Measure Vincentio, Angelo, Isabella, Claudio, Mariana All's Well That Ends Well Bertram, Helena, Parolles, King of France Troilus and Cressida Troilus, Ulysses, Pandarus, Cressida

Period 4

The Two Noble Kinsmen Palamon, Arcite, Jailor's Daughter

Romances

Period 4

The Tempest Prospero, Miranda, Ferdinand, Ariel, Caliban

Prospero was banished to an island, where he raised his daughter and ruled the island inhabitants. A king, his brother, and his son are shipwrecked on the island. The king's son, Ferdinand, falls in love with Miranda, Prospero's daughter who is of eligible age. Prospero puts him to the test. Prospero's slave plots to kill him but is thwarted, and ultimately Ferdinand and Miranda get married.

<u>The Winter's Tale</u> Leontes, Hermione, Paulina, Autolycus, Perdita, Florizel, Polixenes <u>Cymbeline</u> Cymbeline, Imogen, Posthumus, Iachimo <u>Pericles, Prince of Tyre</u> Pericles, Thaisa, Marina, Simonides, Lysimachus

Works in Collaboration

Some people debate the authorship of several of Shakespeare's plays. <u>The Two Noble Kinsmen</u> and <u>King Henry VIII</u> were probably written with John Fletcher. <u>Timon of Athens</u> was probably written with Thomas Middleton.

Poetry

154 Sonnets - These were first printed in 1609, however, exact dates of their composition are impossible to ascertain, as is Shakespeare's intended order for the poems. Scholars divide these sonnets into three groups: Sonnets 1-17 are to a young man about to marry a woman who will have children that will carry on his genealogy. Sonnets 18-126 are to a young man, who ultimately seduces the writer's woman. The remaining sonnets are said to be the writer's infatuations with a "dark lady."

Venus and Adonis
A Lover's Complaint
The Passionate Pilgrim
Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music
The Phoenix and the Turtle

Famous Quotations

From: All's Well That Ends Well

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie, Which we ascribe to Heaven. - Helena - Act I, sc. 1

From: Anthony and Cleopatra

A morsel for a monarch. Act i. Sc. 5.

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale Her infinite variety. *Act ii. Sc. 2.*

From: As You Like It

Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold. - Rosalind - Act i. Sc. 3.

Sweet are the uses of adversity, - Duke Senior. - Act ii. Sc. 1.

All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts, His acts being seven ages. At first the infant, Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms. And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel And shining morning face, creeping like snail Unwillingly to school. And then the lover, Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier, Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard; Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel, Seeking the bubble reputation Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice, In fair round belly with good capon lined, With eyes severe and beard of formal cut, Full of wise saws and modern instances; And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon, With spectacles on nose and pouch on side; His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice, Turning again toward childish treble, pipes And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,

That ends this strange eventful history, Is second childishness and mere oblivion, Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. - Jaques - *Act ii.* Sc. 7.

Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them,-but not for love. - Rosalind - Act iv. Sc. 1.

Men are April when they woo, December when they wed: Maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. - Rosalind - Act iv. Sc. 1.

From: Hamlet

O, that this too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
... Frailty, thy name is woman! - Hamlet - Act i. Sc. 2.

Foul deeds will rise,

Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. - Hamlet - Act i. Sc. 2.

For the apparel oft proclaims the man. - Polonius - Act i. Sc. 3.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be; For loan oft loses both itself and friend, Polonius, Act I, Sc. 3

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. - Marcellus - Act i. Sc. 4.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. - Hamlet - *Act i. Sc. 5*.

More matter, with less art. - Gertrude - Act ii. Sc. 2.

Doubt thou the stars are fire; Doubt that the sun doth move; Doubt truth to be a liar; But never doubt I love. - Hamlet - *Act ii. Sc. 2*.

Though this be madness, yet there is method in't. - Polonius - Act ii. Sc. 2.

There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. - Hamlet - Act ii. Sc. 2.

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how expressive and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! - Hamlet - *Act ii. Sc. 2*.

I know a hawk from a handsaw. - Hamlet - Act ii. Sc. 2.

The play's the thing

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. - Hamlet - Act ii. Sc. 2.

To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether t'is nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep: No more;......Hamlet - Act iii. Sc. 1.

Nymph, in thy orisons

Be all my sins remember'd. - Hamlet - Act iii. Sc. 1.

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:

Words without thoughts never to heaven go. - Claudius - Act iii. Sc. 3.

There 's rosemary, that's for remembrance;... and there is pansies, that's for thoughts. - Ophelia - *Hamlet. Act iv. Sc. 5*.

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio - Hamlet - Act v. Sc. 1.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will. - Hamlet - Act v. Sc. 2.

From: Henry IV, Part I

A plague of all cowards, I say. - Falstaff - Act ii. Sc. 4.

This sickness doth infect

The very life-blood of our enterprise. - Hotspur - Act iv. Sc. 1.

Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere. - The Prince - Act v. Sc. 4

From: Henry IV, Part II

He hath eaten me out of house and home. - Mistress Quickly - Act ii. Sc. 1.

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. - King Henry - Act iii. Sc. 1

His cares are now all ended. - Warwick - Act v. Sc. 2.

From: Henry V

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend The brightest heaven of invention! - Chorus - *Prologue*.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead!
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger:
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood. - King Henry V. - Act iii. Sc. 1

From: Henry VIII

They are too thin and bare to hide offenses. - King Henry VIII. - Act v. Sc. 3.

From: King John

Grief fills the room up of my absent child, - Constance - Act iii. Sc. 4.

To gild refined gold, to paint the lily, ...Is wasteful and ridiculous excess. - Salisbury -. Act iv. Sc. 2 Salisbury.

And often times excusing of a fault Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse. - Pembroke - *Act iv. Sc. 2*.

From: King Lear

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow! - King Lear - Act iii. Sc. 2.

Nature's above art in that respect. - King Lear - Act iv. Sc. 6.

I am a man

More sinn'd against than sinning. - King Lear - Act iii. Sc. 2.

Nothing will come of nothing. - King Lear. - Act i. Sc. 1.

From: Julius Caesar

The live-long day. - Marullus - Act i. Sc. 1.

Beware the ides of March. - Soothsayer -. Act i. Sc. 2.

Et tu, Brute! - Caesar - Act iii. Sc. 1.

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. - Mark Antony - Act iii. Sc. 2.

But Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man - Mark Antony . *Act iii. Sc. 2*.

From: Love's Labour's Lost

Light seeking light doth light of light beguile. - Berowne. Act i. Sc. 1.

At Christmas I no more desire a rose Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth; But like of each thing that in season grows. - Berowne - *Act i. Sc. 1*.

From: Macbeth

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself, And falls on the other. - Macbeth - *Act i. Sc.* 7.

Nor time nor place Did then adhere. - Lady Macbeth - *Act i. Sc.* 7

Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep, Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care, - Macbeth - Act II, Sc. 2.

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather The multitudinous seas incarnadine, Making the green one red. - Macbeth -. *Act ii. Sc. 2*.

There's daggers in men's smiles. - Donalbain - Act ii. Sc. 3,

Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn, and cauldron bubble. - Witches - Act iv. Sc. 1. Witches

Out, damned spot! - Lady Macbeth - Act v. Sc. 1.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, 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. Sc. 5*.

From: Measure For Measure

Our doubts are traitors, And make us lose the good we oft might win By fearing to attempt.- Lucio - *Act i. Sc. 4*.

The hand that hath made you fair hath made you good. - Duke - Act iii. Sc. 1.

From: The Merchant of Venice

They are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing. - Nerissa - *Act i. Sc. 2*.

I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? - Shylock - *Act iii. Sc. 1.*

You take my house when you do take the prop That doth sustain my house; you take my life When you do take the means whereby I live. - Shylock - Act iv. Sc. 1.

From: A Midsummer Night's Dream

The course of true love never did run smooth. - Lysander - Act i. Sc. 1.

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind; And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind. - Helena - *Act i. Sc. 1*.

Lord, what fools these mortals be! - Puck - Act iii. Sc. 2.

I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was. - Bottom - Act iv. Sc. 1.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet Are of imagination all compact: - Theseus - Act v. Sc. 1.

From: Much Ado About Nothing

If I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all of your worship. - Dogberry - *Act iii*. *Sc 5*.

Speak low if you speak love. - Don Pedro - Act ii. Sc. 1.

From: Othello

Reputation, reputation! Oh, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. - Cassio - *Act ii. Sc. 3*.

But he that filches from me my good name Robs me of that which not enriches him And makes me poor indeed. - Iago - *Act iii. Sc. 3*.

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock The meat it feeds on. - Iago - *Act iii. Sc. 3*.

Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. - Iago - Act iii. Sc. 3.

'T is neither here nor there. - Emilia - Act iv. Sc. 3.

From: Richard III

Now is the winter of our discontent - Gloucester - Act i. Sc. 1.

An honest tale speeds best, being plainly told. - Queen Elizabeth - Act iv. Sc. 4.

True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings; Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings. - Richmond - Act v. Sc. 2

The selfsame heaven That frowns on me looks sadly upon him. -King Richard III - Act v. Sc. 3.

A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse! - King Richard III - Act v, Sc. 4

From: Romeo and Juliet

My only love sprung from my only hate!!

Too early seen unknown, and known too late! - Juliet - *Act i. Sc. 5*.

But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.- Romeo -. *Act ii. Sc. 2*.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand! O that I were a glove upon that hand, That I might touch that cheek! - Romeo - *Act ii. Sc. 2*. O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? - Juliet - Act ii. Sc. 2.

What's in a name? That which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet. - Juliet - *Act ii. Sc. 2*.

The god of my idolatry. - Juliet - Act ii. Sc. 2.

How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night, Like softest music to attending ears! - Romeo -Act ii. Sc. 2.

Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow, That I shall say good night till it be morrow. - Juliet - Act ii. Sc. 2. Juliet

From: The Taming of the Shrew

Nothing comes amiss, so money comes withal. - Grumio - Act i, sc. 2

A woman moved is like a fountain troubled, - Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty. - Katherine - *Act v, Sc. 2*

From: The Tempest

Our revels now are ended. ... We are such stuff As dreams are made on; and our little life Is rounded with a sleep. - Prospero - *Act iv. Sc. 1*.

The fringed curtains of thine eye advance. - Prospero - Act i. Sc. 2.

He that dies pays all debts. Stephano *The Tempest. Act iii. Sc. 2*.

From: Titus Andronicus

Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge. - Tamora - Act i. Sc. 1.

From: Troilus and Cressida

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.- Ulysses - Act iii. Sc. 3.

From: Twelfth Night

If music be the food of love, play on; - Duke - Act I, Sc. 1

I am all the daughters of my father's house, And all the brothers too. - Viola - *Act ii, Sc. 4* Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em. - Malvolio - *Act ii*, *Sc. 5*

Memorable Passages from Sonnets

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrance of things past, I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought, And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste. *Sonnet xxx*.

My grief lies onward and my joy behind. Sonnet l.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,—
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang. Sonnet lxxiii.

'T is better to be vile than vile esteem'd,
When not to be receives reproach of being;
And the just pleasure lost which is so deem'd,
Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing. *Sonnet cxxi*.