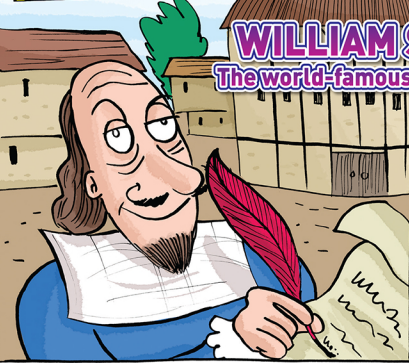


# THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES!

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE The world-famous writer of poetry and plays



It's 26 April 1564 in cosy Stratford-upon-Avon. William Shakespeare is born to prosperous glove-maker, John, and his wife, Mary...



Very little is known about William's childhood, but it's thought that he went to a good school and had a good upbringing!

In fact, William's life is dotted with mysteries! We know he got married and had three children, but then he disappeared from records for seven years!



Well, he was here just now!  
He suddenly turned up as a playwright in London in 1592!

No one knows for sure how William got started but experts believe he began looking after horses outside a theatre, and he impressed a member of the company with his great stories.



Wow! Your stories are great!  
Stick with me, Kid, I've totally got the job for you!

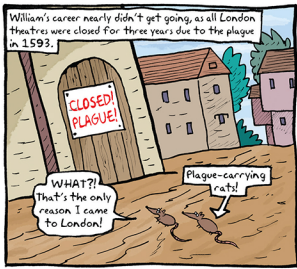
Shakespeare's rivals were known as the 'University Wits'. They were all down on William because he hadn't gone to university like them!



Ho, ho! I've called him 'Shake-scene'!  
Brilliant! That'll show him!  
By 1594, all three rivals had passed away, leaving the way clear for William to rule the stage!



The theatre of the 16th Century was far more rowdy than that of today! If the audience would start shouting at the actors, if they didn't approve, and even start throwing food at them!  
Boo!  
Rubbish!  
Carrot!  
Man dressed as woman (no ladies allowed on stage!)  
Everybody loved the theatre. Both the rich and poor came to be entertained - or just have fun, hurling fruit and nuts on stage!



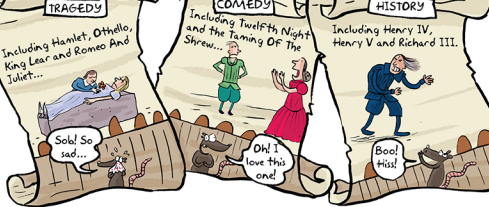
William's career nearly didn't get going, as all London theatres were closed for three years due to the plague in 1592.  
WHAT?! That's the only reason I came to London!  
Plague-carrying rats!

William's theatre company regularly performed at a place called 'The Theatre', but after a dispute with the landlord, they took it apart and moved it across the river!



Actually, maybe it would look better over here!  
They renamed it 'The Swan'.

Shakespeare's plays were immediately big hits! He turned his pen to every different subject and style. All of which can be divided into three categories:



**TRAGEDY**  
Including Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Romeo And Juliet...  
Soul So sad...  
They renamed it 'The Globe'.

**COMEDY**  
Including Twelfth Night and the Taming Of The Shrew...  
Oh! I love this one!

**HISTORY**  
Including Henry IV, Henry V and Richard III.  
Boo! Hiss!

So amazing was Shakespeare, he wrote two plays a year, more than playwrights only wrote one!



Wow-hoo! Watch me go!  
Wait! Romeo And Hamlet? you're getting mixed up!

He also changed the way speeches were written by making them about characters' thoughts.  
Before Shakespeare, speeches had been boring explanations about the play...



Alas poor Yorick, I knew him Horatio!  
I say! How interesting!

And when William wasn't writing plays, he was writing love poems called 'Sonnets'. He wrote 154 of them, all to a secret love...



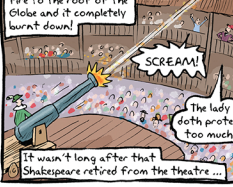
Oh! No pecking!

By 1597, Will had become very rich, rich enough to buy the second-best house in Stratford-upon-Avon!



A house! A house! My Kingdom for a house!  
How about this one, Sir?  
Oh, lovely to!

Disaster struck in 1613 when, during one of the plays, a cannon shot set fire to the roof of the Globe and it completely burnt down!



It wasn't long after that Shakespeare retired from the theatre...  
SCREAM!  
The lady doth protest too much!

He died in 1616 to little fanfare, and strangely made no mention of his career in his will (although he did leave his wife their second-best bed).



Oh, charming!  
The lack of any mention of his plays in his will has led many scholars to wonder if maybe William didn't actually write them!

Scholars have also noted that William never left England's shores, yet showed great knowledge of countries like Italy in his plays...



Don't forget my mysterious lost years. Maybe I travelled around!  
What's most likely is that Shakespeare packed all his references from classic old plays, just like everyone else did!

Through the centuries, Shakespeare's work has earned him the accolade of 'Greatest Ever Playwright'! His stories are of ten depicted on TV and in films - even in science-fiction movies!



All the world's a stage...  
Hooray! I love Shakespeare!

Shakespeare's legacy is so great that he invented hundreds of words and phrases that we still use today. You're probably quoting Shakespeare right now!



I don't know, it's all Greek to me!  
I wish you'd disappear into thin air!