

**Can-U-Read**

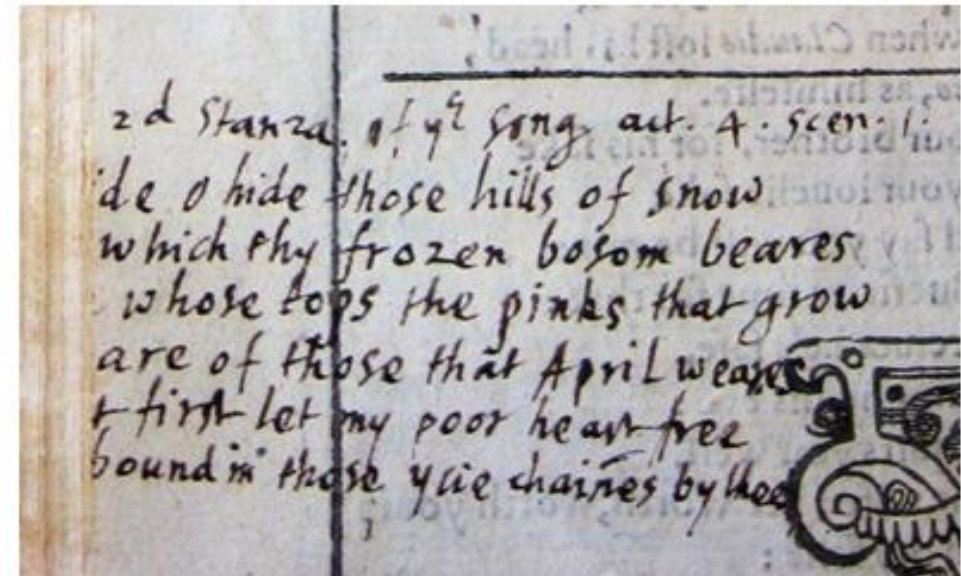
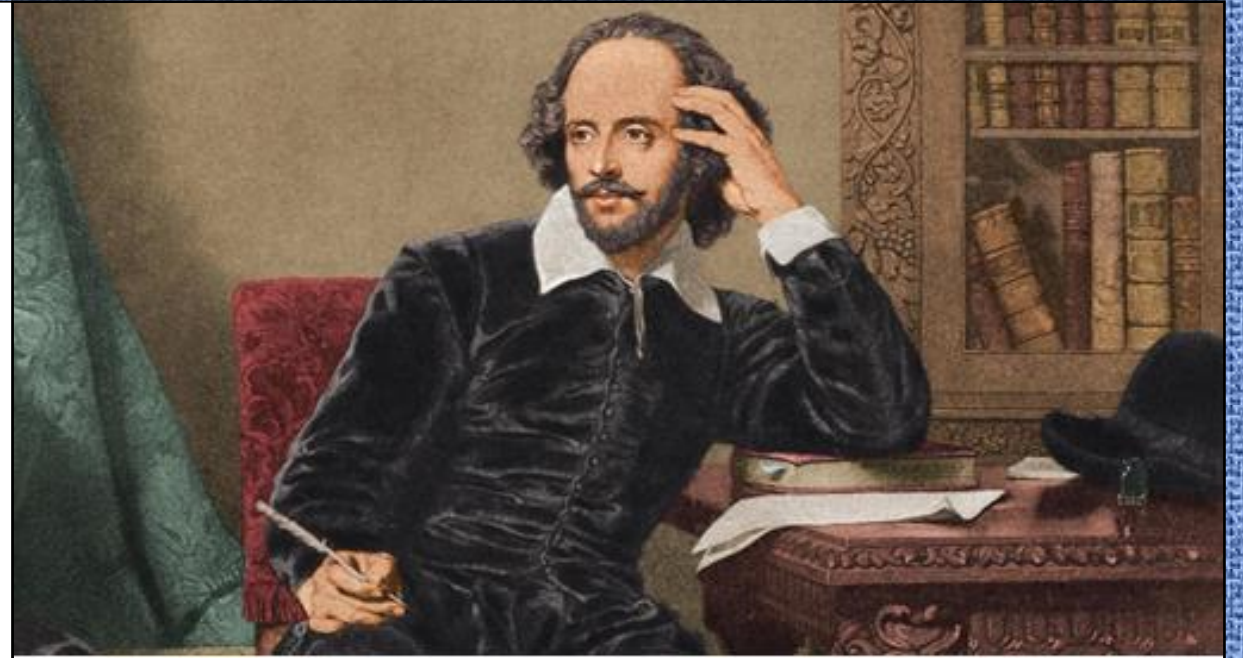
**Romeo & Juliet**

William Shakespeare was a great writer who lived almost 500 years ago.

In his time he wrote many stories, poems, and plays about love, fighting, hatred, sadness, revenge, and peace.

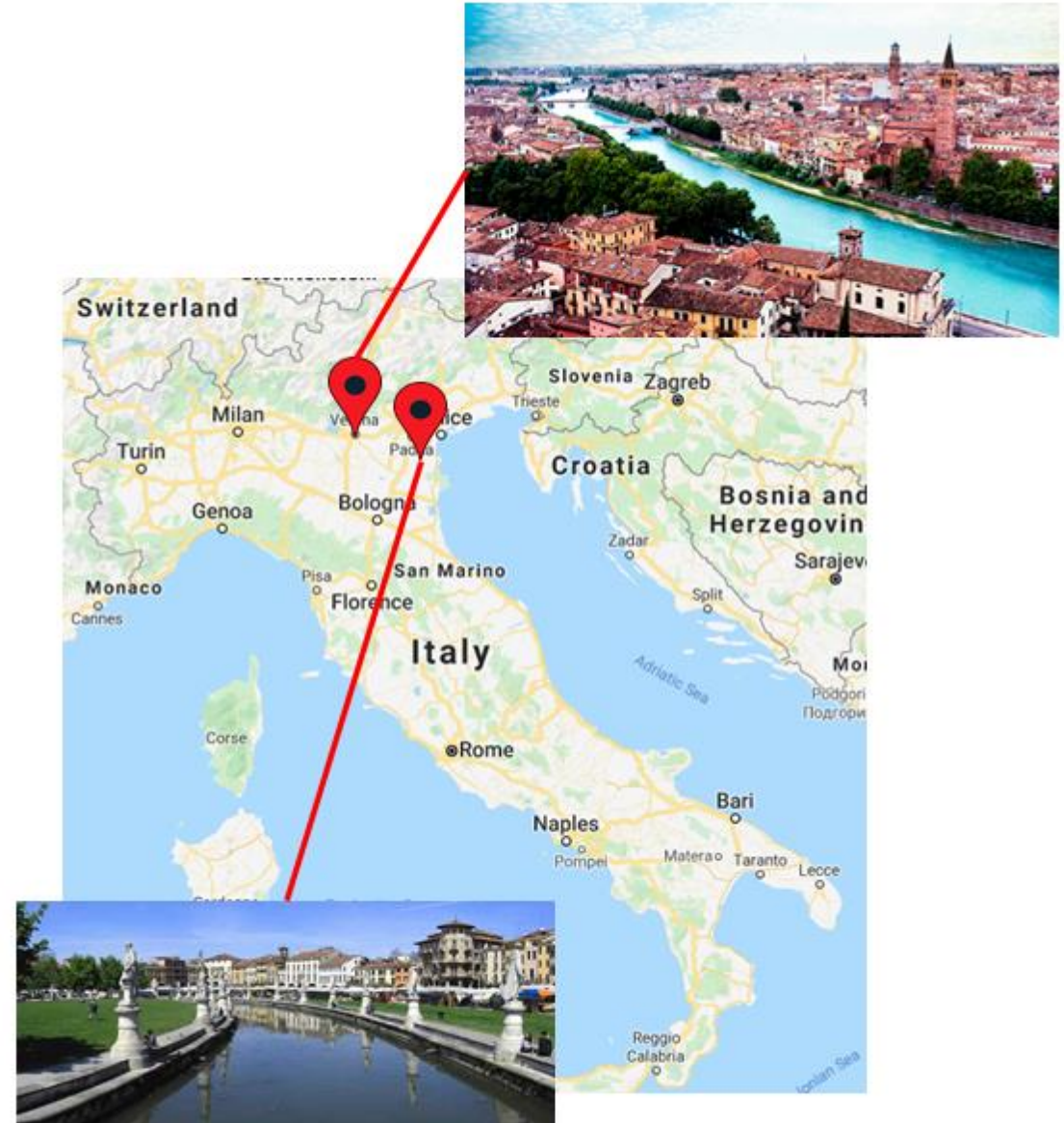
Some of his best writings are still very well known today.

Even though he wrote so long ago, his writings still have meaning today.





In one of his most famous stories, Shakespeare borrowed characters from two real families of Italy. The Cappelletti and the Montecchi were enemies that fought in different cities across northern Italy. The story takes place in the cities of Verona and Padua.



Two proud families in the beautiful city of Verona had a long-standing fight. Every time they met it would break out in bloody streets.

But from these families came two young people with the stars against their love.



These two met such a pitiful death that their parents had to stop the fighting.

Their love-in-death was the only thing that could cool their parent's rage.

Listen to their story.





One morning, on a peaceful street, in pretty little Verona, two groups met. This shouldn't matter, but one group was Montague while the other was Capulet. This was a bad thing. Whenever they met it always meant a fight.

Sure enough, one man made a face at the other group and very soon they were fighting in the street.



One of the Montagues was the nice young Benny. Benny tried to stop the fight, but he was interrupted by Tybalt.

Tybalt is the name of a famous cat, so Tybalt was naturally nicknamed “the cat”. Tybalt was a Capulet. He was not a nice guy. He didn’t want to stop the fight. He wanted to kill Benny.

“Peace!” yelled Benny. “Put up your swords!”

“Peace?” yelled Tybalt. “How I hate the word. Like I hate hell, all Montagues, and YOU!”

The fight got so bad that other people joined in to stop it. Even Father Montague and Father Capulet joined in.



The Prince came in to stop the fighting. He pulled both Father Montague and Father Capulet away. He tells them that this fighting has got to end.

This is the third time they have fought in his streets. He tells them that if this happens again, he will put the offenders to death. Tell them not to fight in public or I will kill someone!

Both men agree that the fighting is over. They promise that there will be no more arguments. Somehow, the Prince doesn't believe them.





Benny stays there to clean up and along comes Romeo his cousin. Romeo's father is Father Montague. He is surprised to see such a mess, but he knows what happened.

Romeo gets very confused. He sees the mess, but he is also deeply troubled. He goes on and on about love and hate. Benny just laughs. Who is Romeo in love with?

Romeo is only thinking about Rosalyn, but she wants to be a nun. She will never get married. Benny tells him to stop being so crazy about one girl, when they are going to a party tonight. There are girls there.





Father Capulet says that it's time to get the family busy doing something other than fighting. He asks young Paris to his home and invites him to meet and marry Capulet's daughter.

Paris is surprised, but happy to marry the only daughter of rich Capulet. He says yes.



At the same time Lady Capulet talks with her daughter, Juliet. She tells her that getting married to a great man is the best path for a young girl. She tells her to meet Paris at the party tonight.

Juliet is not very interested, but she will always obey her mother.



At the party that night the Capulets introduce Paris and Juliet. This is not unusual. Back then most marriages were arranged by parents. Things are moving along nicely. It looks like a good match.

But across the room something else is happening. Romeo sees Juliet just once and forgets about Rosalyn forever.



Someone else is watching. Tybalt is very mad that Romeo came to his family's party.

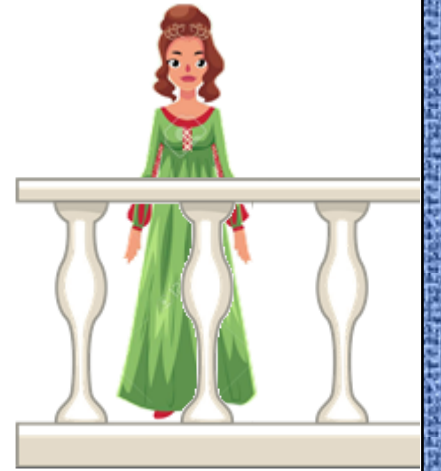
He tries to make trouble, but his uncle Capulet forces him out of the room, leaving Romeo and Juliet alone.



Romeo talks to Juliet and they flirt a little. Just as she leaves, Romeo realizes she is a Capulet. As he leave, Juliet's nurse asks his name. Now she knows he is a Montague. How can this love ever be?

Romeo escapes from his friends and hides in the Capulet's garden. He is so happy to see Juliet come out onto a balcony. She is like the sun coming out through that window.

She sighs and places a hand on her cheek. If only he were a glove on her hand, that could touch her cheek. Oh how he wished she would speak up.





“Oh Romeo. Why are you Romeo? Why are you named Montague? That name isn’t part of you. You could lose your name and still be Romeo. If a Rose were called a daisy it would still smell as sweet. So you would still be that perfect Romeo if you weren’t called Montague.

Oh Romeo. Get rid of your name. Or, if you promise to love me, I will no longer be a Capulet.”

This is all Romeo wanted to hear so he came out and promised just what she wants. He told her that he does love her. They promised to be married the next day.



They sneak off to a priest in secret. He marries them before anyone can tell him not to. He hopes that this marriage can stop all the fighting. Maybe this love is strong enough to end the quarrels.



That afternoon Tybalt jumps out and challenges Romeo to a duel. Benny is with Romeo and so is Mercutio, the Prince's nephew.

Romeo can't turn down a challenge like this. He has to fight!



Romeo does something unexpected.

“Tybalt, I have good reasons to love you. It doesn’t matter what name you call me. I will not fight you.”

Tybalt is furious. Romeo *must* fight!



Mercutio doesn’t know why his friend is acting like a coward, but Mercutio is not afraid.

“Rat catcher, I want one of your nine lives.”

Tybalt is happy to finally have someone to fight.





Benny and Romeo try to stop them from fighting. Benny remembers what the Prince said. Romeo wants to stop the fight with his wife's cousin. Somewhere in the middle Tybalt manages to stab Mercutio.

As Tybalt runs away, Romeo and Benny try to help Mercutio.

“Come on,” they say, “You can’t be hurt that badly.”

Mercutio is still trying to make jokes. “It’s not as big as a door, but it will do. Tomorrow, I will be a grave man. Image that. A man scratched to death by a cat.”

Then he looks at Romeo. “Why did you come between us? I was wounded because of you. Now worms will eat me. I hope both your families die.”



Romeo is terribly angry. He chases down Tybalt and this time he does fight. Tybalt is killed and Benny shows up in time to remind Romeo about the Prince's new law.

“Romeo, don't just stand there. You need to leave now for Padua. Go there and wait.”



When Capulet gets the news he decides that he has to marry his daughter off tonight! But Juliet tells her mother she can't. She knows she is already married to Romeo. Capulet tells Paris that she is just upset about her cousin Tybalt's death.



Juliet visits the priest and tells him that either he helps her, or she will die. He has an idea. He gives her a poison, but one that will not kill. Instead it will put her into a deep sleep. She will be buried, and he will bring Romeo to her. She agrees.



But before he can get to Romeo in Padua, Benny tells Romeo what happened. She is dead! Romeo is heartbroken. He races back to Verona and on the way, he buys his own poison. This one, is for real.





When Romeo arrives, Paris is at Juliet's tomb. He is putting flowers on her grave. He sees Romeo and only knows that he was the man that killed Tybalt. Paris blames him for Juliet's death. He thinks Romeo is trying to play some trick on Juliet's body.



They fight and Paris dies. Romeo quickly goes to Juliet's body. He sees that she doesn't even look dead, yet. He hugs her once, kisses her lips, and then drinks the poison.



When Juliet wakes up, she finds Romeo dead. She sees the poison, but there is none left. She then sees a small dagger. She picks it up and stabs herself. She falls down dead across her husband.

The Prince comes and yells at everyone. Capulet has lost a daughter. Montague has lost a son. Paris is dead. Tybalt is dead.



Even the Prince's cousin is dead. "We are all being punished," He says.

Montague and Capulet are both sorry. They decide to burry the couple together.



For never was a tale of more woe,  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

