

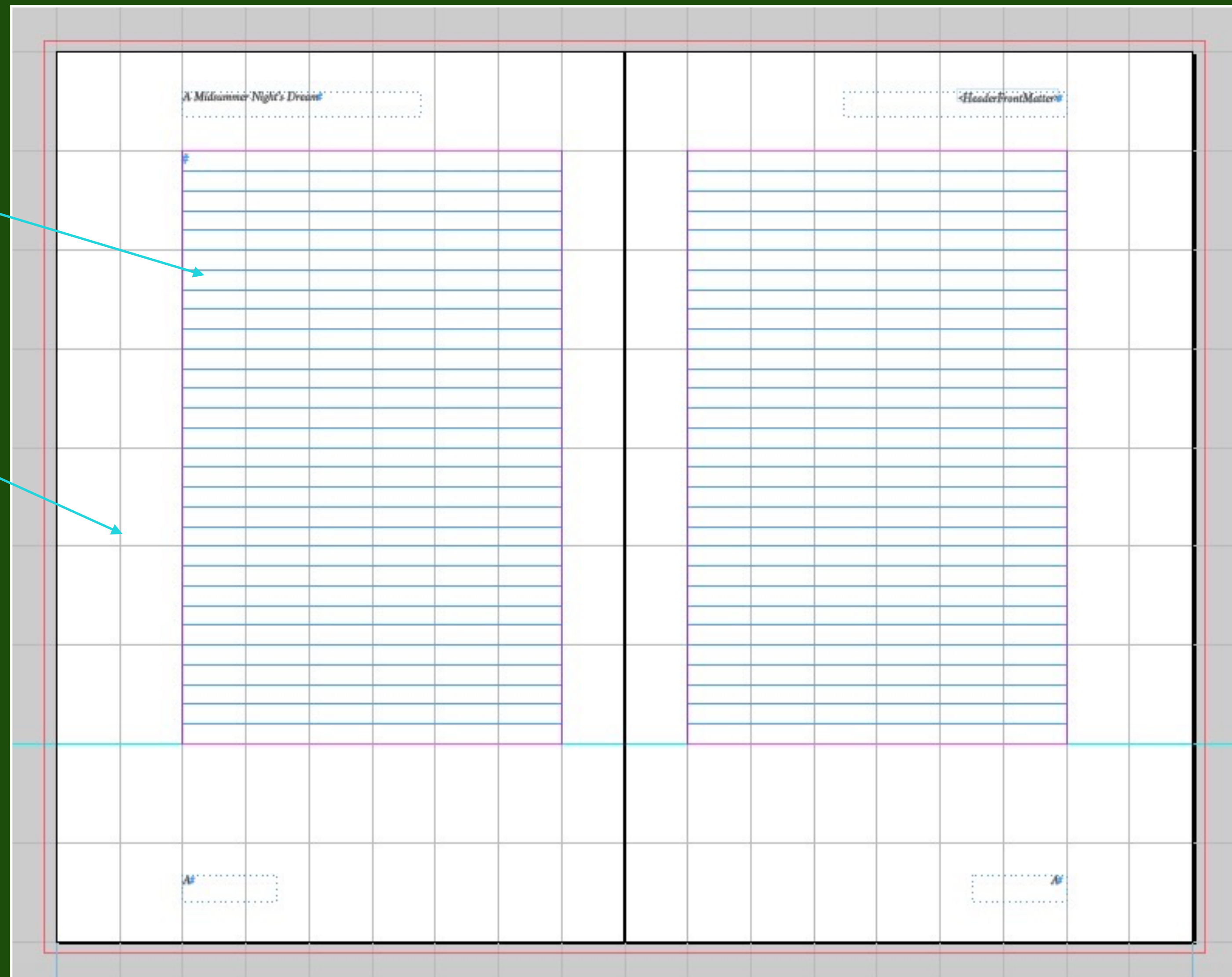
Grids & Guides

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Grids & Guides

<p><i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i></p>	<p><i>An Introduction to William Shakespeare's Life</i></p>
<p>OUR KNOWLEDGE OF SHAKESPEARE</p> <p>No one in Shakespeare's day seems to have been interested in learning about the private lives of the dramatists. The profession of play writing had scarcely begun to be distinguished from that of play acting, and the times were not wholly gone by when all actors had been classed in public estimation as vagabonds. While the London citizens were constant theatregoers, and immensely proud of their fine plays, they were content to learn of the writers of plays merely from town gossip, which passed from lip</p>	<p>playhouse fell under the ban of polite conversation, and was lost.</p> <p>Under such conditions we cannot wonder that we know so little of Shakespeare, and that we must go to town records, cases at law, and book registers for our knowledge. Thanks to the diligence of modern scholars, however, we know much more of Shakespeare than of most of his fellow-actors and playwrights. The life of Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare's great predecessor, is almost unknown; and of John Fletcher, Shakespeare's great contemporary and successor, it is not even known whether he was married, or when he began to write plays. Yet his father was Bishop of London, and in high favor with Queen Elizabeth. We ought rather to wonder at the good fortune which has preserved for us, however scanty in details or lacking in the authority of its traditions, a continuous record of the life of William Shakespeare from birth to death.</p>
	<p>STRATFORD</p> <p>The notice of baptism on April 26, 1564, of William, son of John Shakespeare, appears in the church records of Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire. Stratford was then a market town of about fifteen hundred souls. Under Stratford Market Cross the farmers of northern Warwickshire and of the near-lying portions of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, and Oxfordshire carried on a brisk trade with the thrifty townspeople. The citizens were accustomed to boast of their beautiful church by the river, and of the fine Guildhall, where sometimes plays</p>
<p>The Globe Theatre in London</p>	