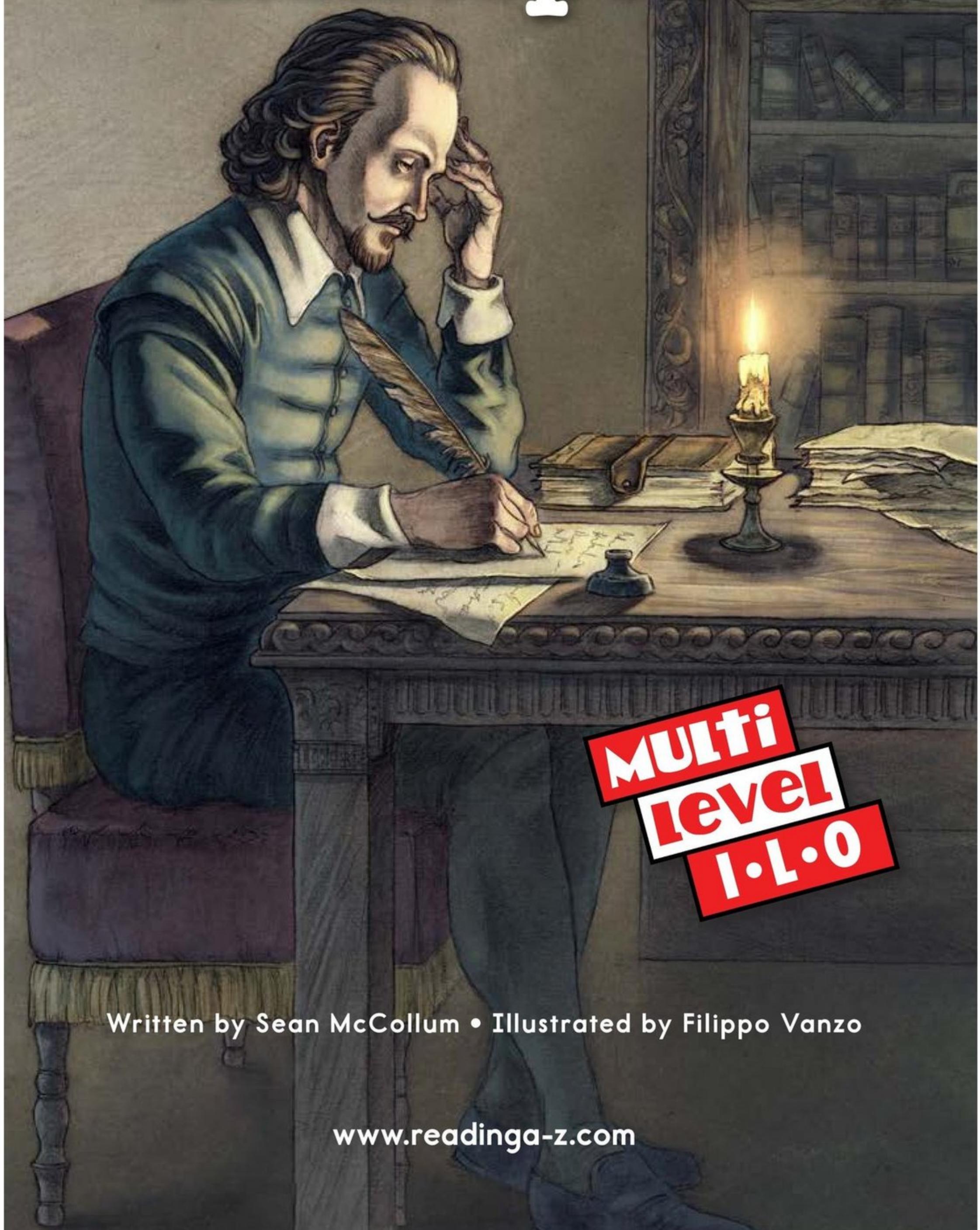


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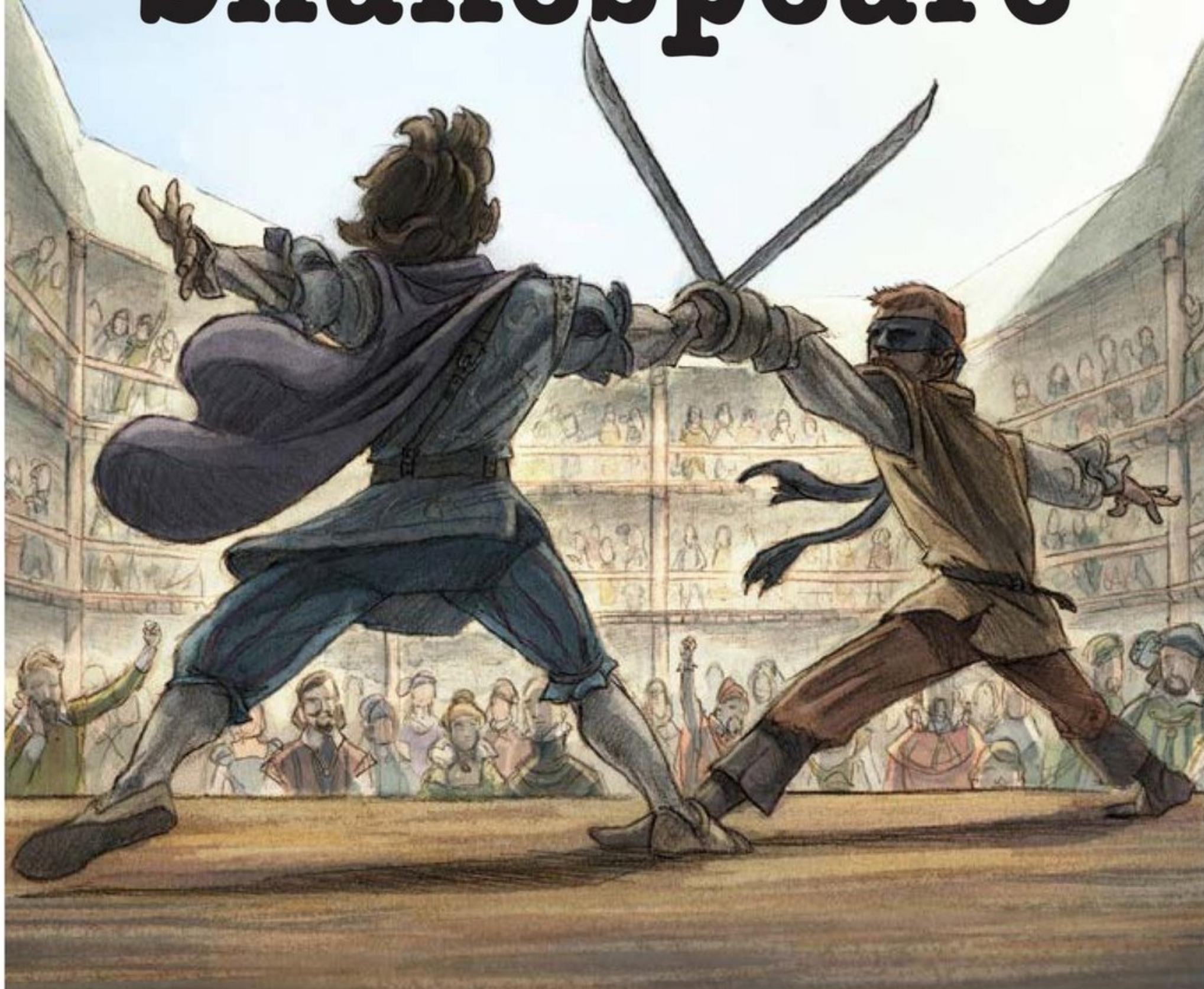
# William Shakespeare



MULTI  
level  
I-L-O

Written by Sean McCollum • Illustrated by Filippo Vanzo

# William Shakespeare



Written by Sean McCollum  
Illustrated by Filippo Vanzo

[www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)

## Focus Question

Who was William Shakespeare, and  
why do people remember him?

## Words to Know

actor

playwright

comedies

popular

history

tragedies

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### Correlation

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# Introduction

William Shakespeare was a poet and a **playwright** in England. He was born in 1564.



This may be a painting of Shakespeare, but experts are not sure.

He died in 1616. Shakespeare has been a **popular** writer for more than four hundred years. People like his plays because they make people feel

happy, sad, shocked, or scared. His stories are exciting, and they also make people think about big ideas such as good and evil. Writers still look to his beautiful writing to help them write their own good stories.



## Shakespeare's Family

William was born to John and Mary Shakespeare in England in April 1564. He probably went to a very good school as a boy. Most people at the time didn't know how to read or write. Shakespeare married a woman named Anne in 1582. They had three children.



## Shakespeare in London

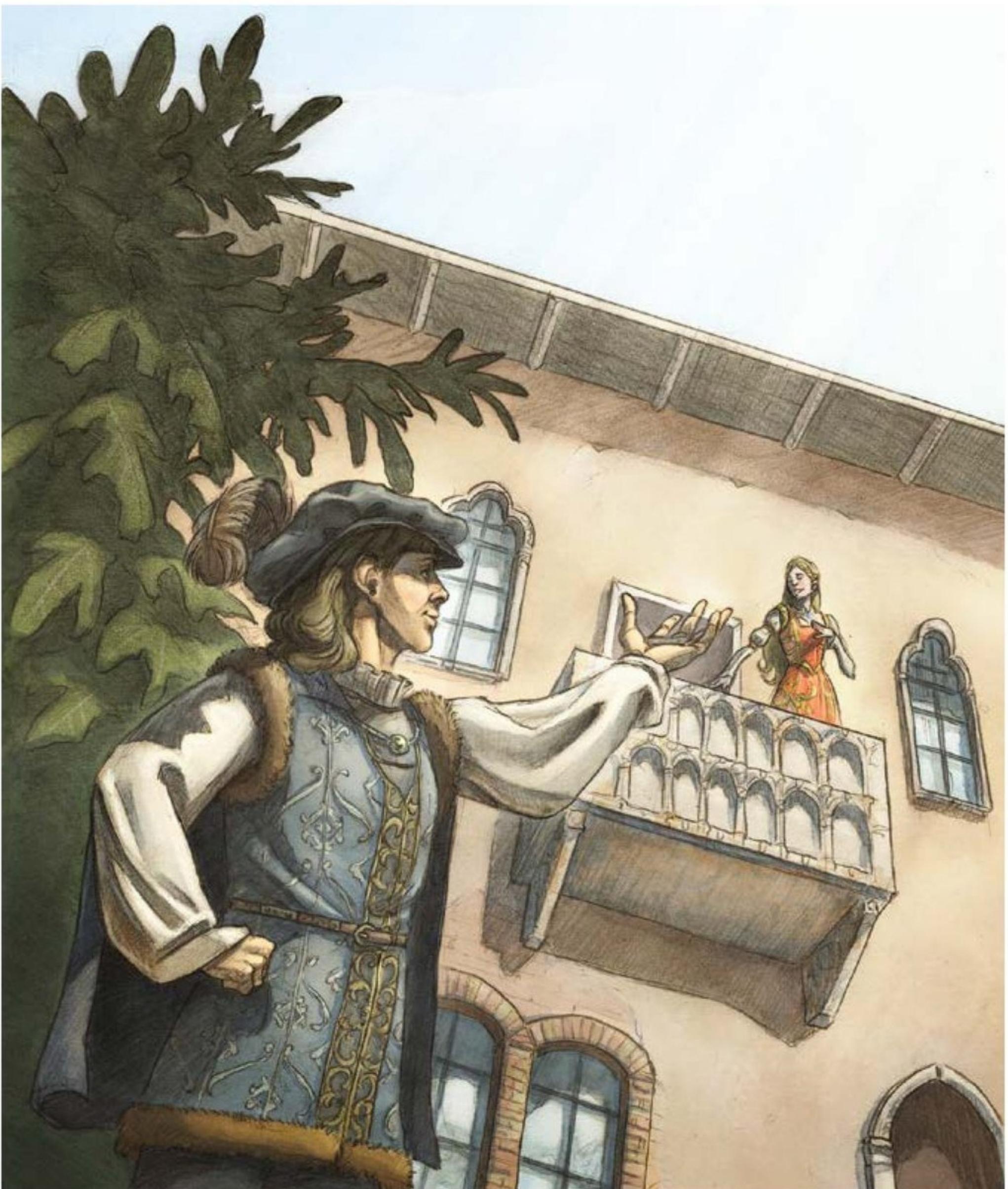
By 1592, Shakespeare moved to London and worked as an **actor** and playwright. Soon after, he had become part owner of an acting group. Shakespeare rose to success. In 1599, he helped found a popular London theater.



## London Theater

Theater was exciting during Shakespeare's time, with fancy costumes and sword fights. The crowds were loud. They yelled "boo" at the bad guys and cheered the good guys. They even threw food at the actors.

Most plays took place in the afternoon under natural daylight. Only men were allowed to act. Women were banned from acting.



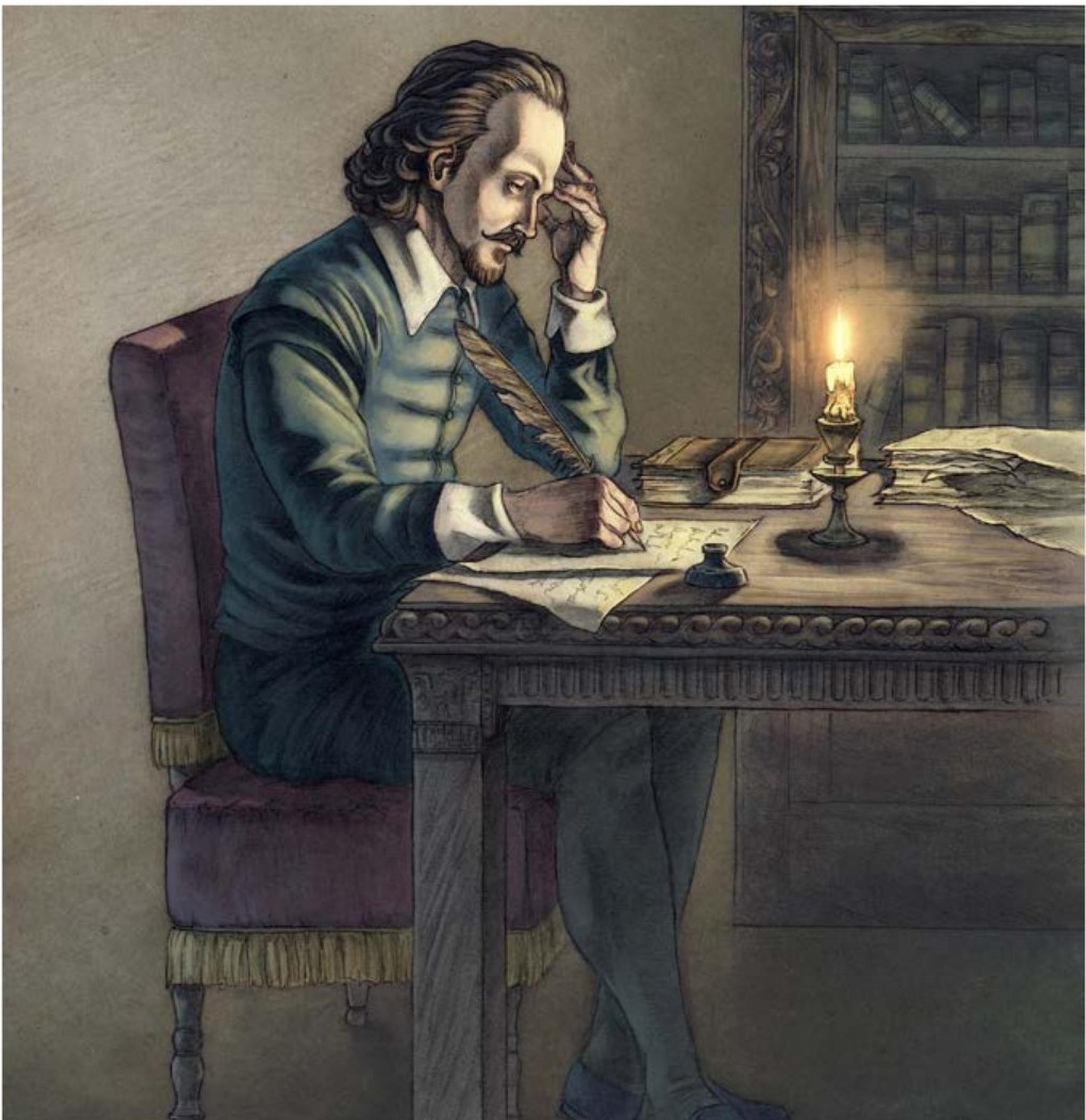
## Shakespeare's Plays

Shakespeare wrote three main types of plays: **tragedies**, histories, and **comedies**. Tragedies are sad plays with people who make mistakes.



Students in California (top) and actors in England (bottom) act in Shakespeare's play *Henry V*, about one of England's kings.

Shakespeare's **history** plays are mostly about kings of England. Shakespeare's comedies are often funny love stories.



## Shakespeare's Importance

For hundreds of years, people around the world have enjoyed Shakespeare's plays. They've laughed and cried along with his characters. Shakespeare's stories are just as good as time passes.



Students in Denver, Colorado, act in Shakespeare's plays.

People feel connected to Shakespeare's stories about love, hate, bravery, and power. It doesn't matter if they take place today or long ago. People relate to his characters. For example, Iago from *Othello* is evil yet still human. Shakespeare's characters Romeo and Juliet stand the test of time as an example of true love.

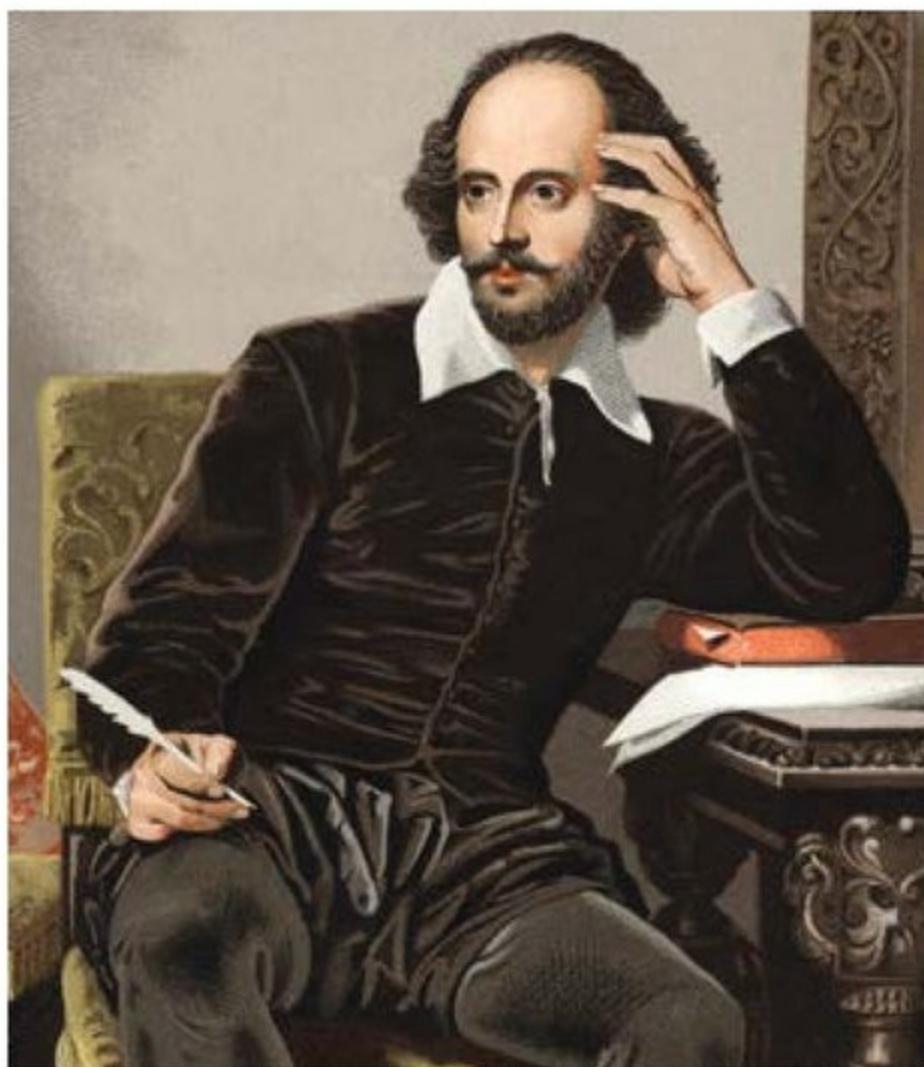


People sit outdoors and watch Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* in England.

People around the world can read Shakespeare's plays in their own language. Shakespeare festivals around the world draw large crowds. Some actors are even doing the plays in the kind of English from Shakespeare's time. It sounds much different from today's English.

Many actors say that their parts in Shakespeare's plays are the most important they've ever played. Actors have to work really hard to become their characters. Children act in his plays as well. Many of Shakespeare's plays have been made into films.

# Shakespeare's Poems



This image was made two hundred years after Shakespeare died.

Shakespeare wrote one hundred fifty-four sonnets. A *sonnet* is a special type of poem with fourteen lines.

His sonnets were mostly about love.

His most famous

sonnet began with the line,

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”

## Language Wizard

Have you ever had “too much of a good thing” or “been sent on a wild goose chase”? You quoted Shakespeare and probably didn’t know it. Shakespeare invented new words that we still use today. He made up words such as *buzzer*, *gloomy*, *hint*, and hundreds of others. He also put new words together, such as *eyeball* and *leapfrog*.





Many people visit Shakespeare's grave in a church in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

## Shakespeare's Death

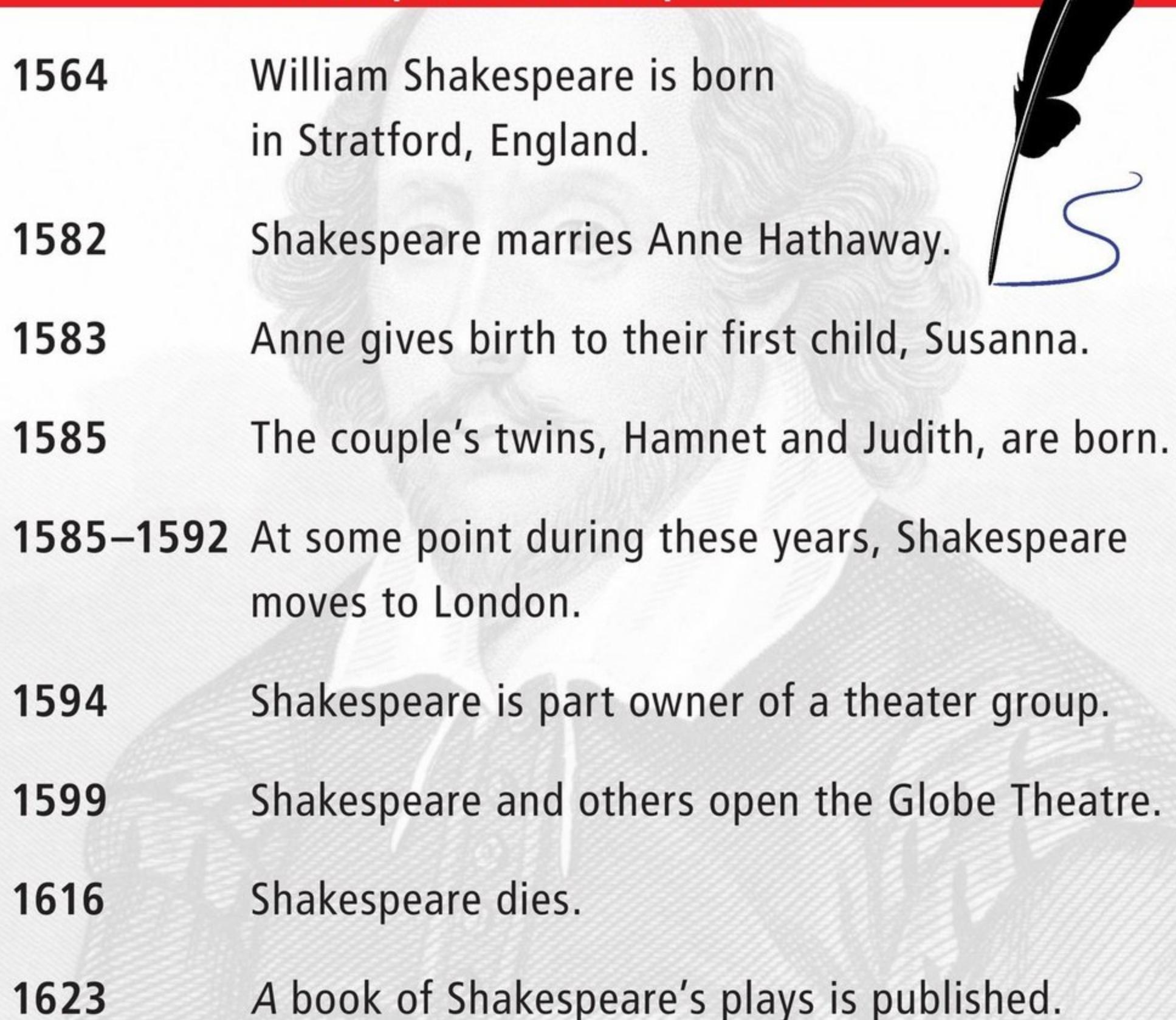
William Shakespeare died in 1616. His friends put together a book of his plays. They made sure that people read and saw his plays.

His friend wrote about Shakespeare's work in the book. He said it was "for all time." He was right!

# Conclusion

Today, William Shakespeare is thought to be one of the greatest writers who ever lived. Shakespeare's plays are exciting and fun, and they also touch people. His characters show how difficult—and how beautiful—life can be.

## Shakespeare's Life: Important Dates

- 
- 1564** William Shakespeare is born in Stratford, England.
  - 1582** Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway.
  - 1583** Anne gives birth to their first child, Susanna.
  - 1585** The couple's twins, Hamnet and Judith, are born.
  - 1585–1592** At some point during these years, Shakespeare moves to London.
  - 1594** Shakespeare is part owner of a theater group.
  - 1599** Shakespeare and others open the Globe Theatre.
  - 1616** Shakespeare dies.
  - 1623** A book of Shakespeare's plays is published.



## Glossary

<b>actor</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a person who acts out parts on stage, on television, or in movies (p. 6)
<b>comedies</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	types of entertainment with funny characters and a happy ending (p. 8)
<b>history</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	past events (p. 9)
<b>playwright</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	someone who writes plays (p. 4)
<b>popular</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	liked or enjoyed by many people (p. 4)
<b>tragedies</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	plays, movies, or books with sad endings (p. 8)

# William Shakespeare

A *Reading A-Z Level L Leveled Book*

Word Count: 485

## Connections

### Writing and Art

Write an acrostic poem about Shakespeare. Use the name Shakespeare as the acrostic. Each letter in his name begins a line of your poem.

### The Arts

Create a topic web about Shakespeare's plays. Complete the web with details from the book. Discuss what you learned with a partner.

The logo for Reading A-Z features the word "Reading" in a large, bold, red sans-serif font. The letter "R" has a small sun-like icon with rays above it. To the right of "Reading" is a large, stylized, blocky letter "A-Z".

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