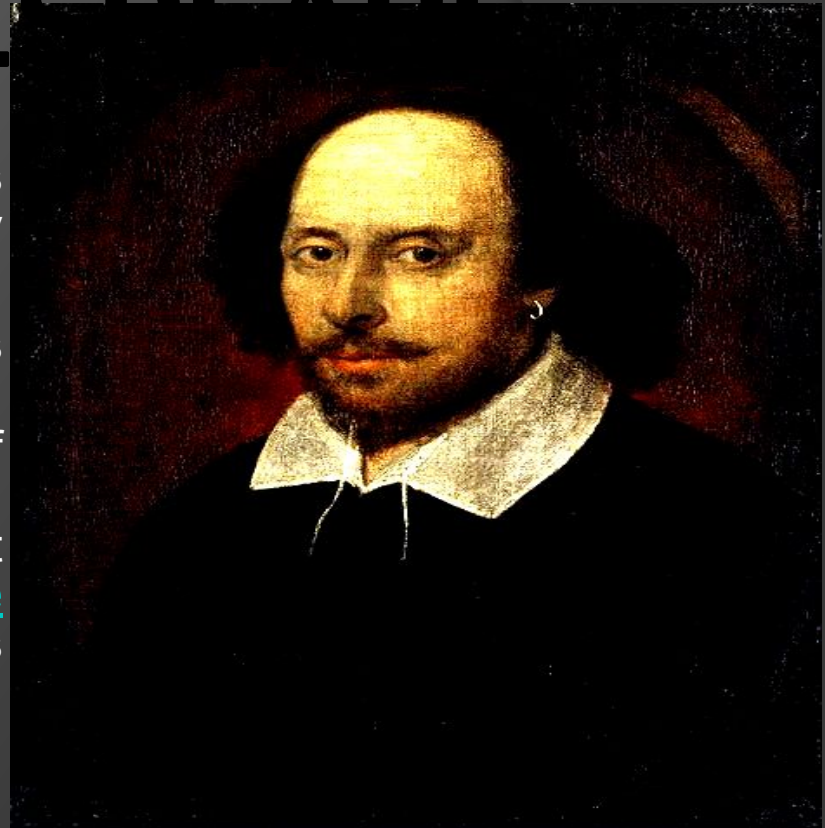


WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare (born 26 April 1564; died 23 April 1616) was an [English poet](#) and [playwright](#), widely regarded as the greatest writer in the [English language](#) and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's [national poet](#) and the "Bard of Avon". His surviving works, including some [collaborations](#), consist of about 38 [plays](#), 154 [sonnets](#), two long [narrative poems](#), and several other poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.





Shakespeare was born and raised in [Stratford-upon-Avon](#). At the age of 18, he married [Anne Hathaway](#), with whom he had three children: [Susanna](#), and twins [Hamnet](#) and [Judith](#). Between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in [London](#) as an actor, writer, and part owner of a [playing company](#) called the [Lord Chamberlain's Men](#), later known as the [King's Men](#). He appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613, where he died three years later. Few records of Shakespeare's private life survive, and there has been considerable speculation about such matters as his [physical appearance](#), [sexuality](#), [religious beliefs](#), and whether the works attributed to him were [written by others](#).

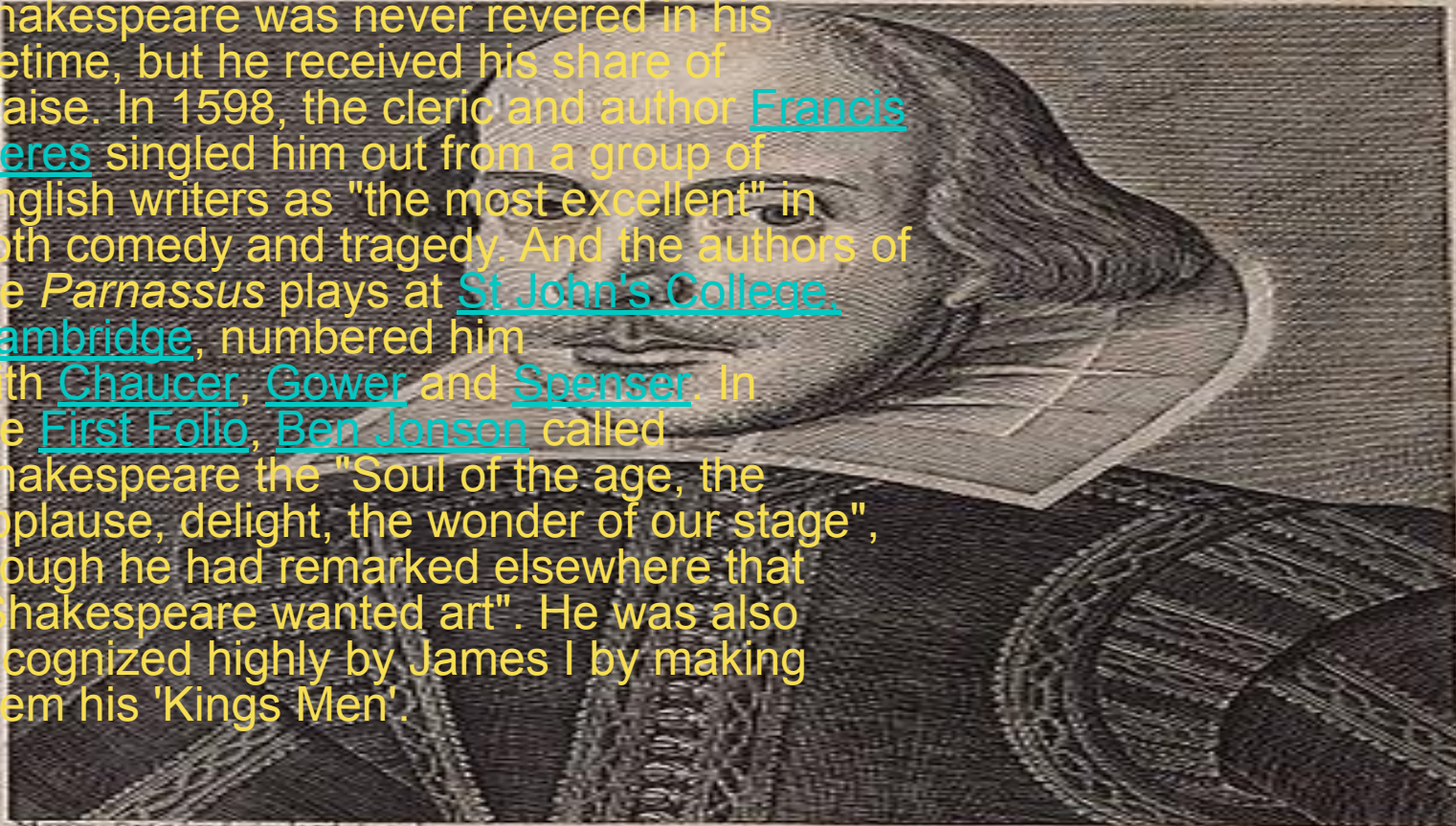
Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly [comedies](#) and [histories](#), genres he raised to the peak of sophistication and artistry by the end of the 16th century. He then wrote mainly [tragedies](#) until about 1608, including [Hamlet](#), [King Lear](#), and [Macbeth](#), considered some of the finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote [tragicomedies](#), also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights.

MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
TRAGEDIES.

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Shakespeare was never revered in his lifetime, but he received his share of praise. In 1598, the cleric and author [Francis Meres](#) singled him out from a group of English writers as "the most excellent" in both comedy and tragedy. And the authors of the *Parnassus* plays at [St John's College, Cambridge](#), numbered him with [Chaucer](#), [Gower](#) and [Spenser](#). In the [First Folio](#), [Ben Jonson](#) called Shakespeare the "Soul of the age, the applause, delight, the wonder of our stage", though he had remarked elsewhere that "Shakespeare wanted art". He was also recognized highly by James I by making them his 'Kings Men'.



L O N D O N

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Speculation about Shakespeare



Authorship

- Around 150 years after Shakespeare's death, doubts began to emerge about the authorship of the works attributed to him. Proposed alternative candidates include [Francis Bacon](#), [Christopher Marlowe](#), and [Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford](#). Several "group theories" have also been proposed. Only a small minority of academics believe there is reason to question the traditional attribution, but interest in the subject, particularly the [Oxfordian theory](#), continues into the 21st century.

Religion

- Some scholars claim that members of Shakespeare's family were [Catholics](#), at a time when Catholic practice was against the law. Shakespeare's mother, [Mary Arden](#), certainly came from a pious Catholic family. The strongest evidence might be a Catholic statement of faith signed by [John Shakespeare](#), found in 1757 in the rafters of his former house in Henley Street. The document is now lost, however, and scholars differ on its authenticity. In 1591, the authorities reported that John had missed church "for fear of process for debt", a common Catholic excuse. In 1606, William's daughter Susanna was listed among those who failed to attend Easter [communion](#) in Stratford. Scholars find evidence both for and against Shakespeare's Catholicism in his plays, but the truth may be impossible to prove either way.

He was a great person!

- ⦿ Thanks for watching