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opening extract from  
**The Life and Times of  
William Shakespeare**

Written by  
**Kristen McDermott, PhD  
and Ari Berk, PhD**

Published by  
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# THE LIFE AND TIMES OF *William Shakespeare*

A RECOLLECTION OF HIS YEARS AND WORKS, DONE IN APRIL,  
THE YEERE OF OURE LORD 1613, UPON THE EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE  
FROM *LOSODOS*, TO RETIREMENT IN *STRATFORD-UTOS* & *AVOS*.



WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY  
KRISTEN McDERMOTT, PhD AND ARI BERK, PhD

INCLUDING EXTRACTS FROM THE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, GENTLEMAN AND POET

ILLUSTRATED  
*The Templar Company*

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THE ROMAUNCE  
call'd  
**THE TEMPEST**  
To be acted by  
The Kings Maiesties  
SERVANTS at the Globe  
As it was performed  
for the nuptiall solemnities  
of Her gracious Highness  
the PRINCESS ELIZABETH  
and His noble Highness  
Frederick of Bohemia  
Elector Palatine  
with ye *Tempest* enacted upon the  
complete with fireworks  
The Noble Maske of Juno and Calisto  
together with a draunce of nymphes and sickes  
and with ye pleasant conceited foolery  
of the monster Calibano and the clownes

*The Diseases of*  
A Booke  
of the Diseases of  
the Mouth  
Males  
Females  
In all  
Parishes Infected  
Lord Maier and C  
ances and a ha  
weight.



*Publisher's Note*  
Although William Shakespeare is one of the most famous  
authors in English history, little is known about his life,  
even the portrait chosen for this book's cover is only  
supposed - not proven - to be his likeness. In fact, the  
best account has come from a contemporary, the  
transcriptions of his works, and the  
times.

## Childhood Days & Stratford Ways

"WHEN THAT I WAS AN' A LITTLE TINY BOY..."  
TWELFTH NIGHT, 5.1

I may dwell in London, the greatest city in Christendom, but in sooth I remain a country lad right enough, who walked the same lanes and hedgerows as you, dearest, and your sister Susannah and your poor brother Hamnet. My earliest memories are of May Day and harvest home, sailing ships of straw upon the River Avon and tormenting the geese in the cornfields. I loved well the forest of Arden, named for my mother's family. To myself and my adventurous siblings, Joan, Gilbert, Dickon and Ned, it was a magical wood where the fair folk watched us act our little plays of hunters, of pirates and of course, of Robin Hood and his Merry Men.



I have a hook when the will from above,  
When water and the sabbling night grows,  
Quite over-camouflaged with luscious swanfish,  
With sweet neck-veins and with eyeliner.  
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1.1

Small wonder my plays are filled with country folk – the shepherds, the herdsmen, the tillers and the sicklemen of my youth. Listen carefully – the wisest of my characters are 'hard-handed men', who know the ways of the land and the people who live in and on it. They may speak roughly, but they speak true.



### Fishing on the Avon

Ah, sweet Avon, river of my dream! You were in my mind when I made my beautiful Cleopatra an avid fisherwoman. Give me more anglers, we'll be the river then. My music playing far off, I will betray Trawny-foot's fishes; my hooked hook shall pierce Their slimy jaws and, as I leave them by, I'll see 'Ah, but you're caught!

Antony & Cleopatra, 2.5

I fish only in the waters of memory now, but soon I will tickle trout in our own fresh stream once more.

### Child-rearing Advice

Some old wives' advice from my mother's household book – though I do not recall boiling hair's brains for this – and leaves know: thus 'twas not slow to speak!

- The fastest nighly comes from a wet nurse who is wet enough, or squint eyed, or with a misshapen nose or lips, or with black ill-favored teeth or with stinking breath
- A suckling child should be given hair's brains reduced to jelly
- Thumb-suckers should be offered a piece of liquorice root to mouthe
- If the child will not stop crying, try placing it in a freshly-dug hole in the ground
- For a child that is slow to speak, rub its tongue with honey, salt and frankincense



John Shakespeare was prosperous and well-liked during his son's early years. He served as an alderman of their comfortable town and was even the high bailiff, or mayor, for a term. He also had the enviable post of town ale-taster. John was rich enough to send William to school, and to afford a large two-storey house with a vegetable garden. His wife's family owned several farms nearby, where William probably played and learned many of the country customs that are described in his plays.

John Shakespeare worked hard for a living, but he had hopes that his bright and imaginative son William would grow up to be someone special.



IN JAN A GRASSHOPPER AND SHEPHERD ALIKE OVER WHO IS MOST VIRTUOUS – THOSE IN HIGH PLACES OR THE LOWLY AND BEEF.

### Shepherd's Calendar

Edward Spenser, the great poet, gave us most joyful visions of shepherds and milkmaids in the rustic parts of his 'Shepherd's Calendar'. However, they bear little likeness to the hearty Middlesex folk I know. No furrer garters or saving pastures for my neighbours – give them a drum and fiddle, plenty of ale and the they can go bang!

