

INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

THE BOOK OF WILL



THE BOOK OF WILL SYNOPSIS

The aging actors John Heminges and Henry Condell, members of the King's Men acting company where Shakespeare had been the resident playwright, realize that it is time to publish all of the plays of their former colleague before many of them are lost forever. So with the help of family and friends they set off on a whirlwind adventure to assemble all of the authentic Shakespeare plays they can find in the form of manuscripts, prompt books and actors sides. They also need to solve the problem of the rights to a number of plays that are held by others.

Once all the texts have been assembled and edited, they make a deal with printer William Jaggard to print the plays - Jaggard being a man disliked by Shakespeare for having published some of his plays without permission, and publishing plays under his name that he didn't write. But Jaggard's print shop is the only one in London large enough to handle the project. Since Shakespeare's 38 plays have survived to this day, it's safe to say their efforts were successful!



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THE BOOK OF WILL

By **Lauren Gunderson**

Directed by **Davis McCallum**

Producing Partners:

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Education Partners:

Walter S. Rosenberry, III Charitable Trust

The Book of Will is the recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award

Women's Voices Fund beneficiary

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Additional Education Partners:

Mary & Barry Berlin, Colorado Creative Industries, Corley Family Fund, Fine Arts Foundation, Keith & Kathie Finger, Alan & Katie Fox, Margot & Allan Frank, Thomas D. Lookabaugh Foundation, Murray BMW of Denver, Robert & Judi Newman/ Newman Family Foundation, Robert & Carole Slosky Fund for Education, Walter S. Rosenberry III Charitable Trust, The Salah Foundation, Transamerica, June Travis, United Airlines, Tina Walls, Westin Downtown Denver, U.S. Bank

JAN 13 - FEB 26
RICKETSON THEATRE

THE PLAYWRIGHT — LAUREN GUNDERSON

Lauren Gunderson is a playwright, screenwriter and short story author from Atlanta, Georgia, now residing in San Francisco. She received her BA in English/Creative Writing at Emory University, and her MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU Tisch School, where she was also a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship.

She was awarded the prestigious Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award for her play *I and You* (also a Susan Smith Blackburn finalist and featured in *American Theatre* magazine, July 2014). Her play *Silent Sky* (Jane Chambers Award finalist) premiered at South Coast Repertory theatre in 2011 and was further developed and rewritten for TheatreWorks. Her three-city rolling world premiere of *Exit, Pursued by a Bear* was featured in *American Theatre* magazine and *The Week* and has played in 20 communities across the US, winning “Best Comedy” accolades. Her comedy *Toil and Trouble*, is the second in her Shakespeare Cycle of modern comedies inspired by Shakespeare’s plays. Her first musical, *The Amazing Adventures of Dr. Wonderful and Her Dog!* was commissioned by the Kennedy Center, and toured Florida. *Dr. Wonderful* is becoming a series of children’s books. She is also the co-book-writer for *The Happy Elf*, a Christmas musical with music and lyrics by Harry Connick, Jr.

Gunderson’s play *Emilie: La Marquise Du Chatelet Defends Her Life Tonight* was commissioned by and premiered at South Coast Repertory in 2009 and has played across the country and in England. *By and By*, her sci-fi father-daughter drama, premiered with the Shotgun Players in Berkeley in 2012. *Fire Work* was developed at the National Playwright Conference at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center and is a 2011 winner for the Aurora Theatre Company’s Global Age Project and will premiere at Theatre FIRST. She has developed plays with Second Stage Theatre, Red Bull Theatre and Primary Stages in NYC, New Repertory Theatre in Boston, Playwrights Foundation, Crowded Fire Theatre, Synchronicity and Dog Theatre in Dallas among others.

Gunderson has spoken nationally and internationally on the intersection of science and theatre and arts activism. She also teaches playwriting in San Francisco. She is a Playwright in Residence at the Playwright Foundation, a Dramatists Guild Member and was a member of Just Theatre’s New Play Lab.

www.playscripts.com/playscripts/blog/1347

THE IMPORTANCE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

“He Was Not of an Age, but for All Time.”
—Ben Jonson, preface to the First Folio.

Why do we study and read Shakespeare? Why is he one of the most popular dramatists and poets the Western world has ever produced? One key reason is his ability to portray the range of human emotions and dramatic stories in elegant, poetic language.

He was among the most brilliant storytellers the world has ever known, though he borrowed most of his plots from other sources. Homer sang of adventures in war; Sophocles and Tolstoy told of tragedies; Emily Dickenson wrote about romance; Mark Twain spun comic tales while Dickens churned out melodramatic sagas. But Shakespeare told every kind of theatrical story: comedy, tragedy, history, melodrama, adventure, love stories and fairy tales. Modern writers — Jane Smiley and Toni Morrison among many others — have adapted his stories, translating Shakespeare’s characters and plots into modern settings.

Shakespeare wrote fascinating characters; his tragic heroes are especially well-loved for their complexity and human dimensions. Hamlet, King Lear and Macbeth are literary inventions that

have come to have a legendary life of their own. Contemporary actors consider these and so many other of Shakespeare’s roles to be the pinnacle of a career in the theatre.

Myriad modern writers have praised Shakespeare. For example, Louis Bayard writes: “Shakespeare is acclaimed for his penetrating insights into human characters, his eloquent, flexible and infinitely expressive verse, and his readiness to burst the bounds of the English language.”¹ Marjorie Garber in her work *Shakespeare and Modern Culture* tells us that Sigmund Freud considered Shakespeare “the first Modern, because he understood so well the issues of psychology.”²

1. NY times, Saturday, April 23, 2016, p. 6c.

2. Garber, p. xviii.

Bayard, Louis. “Enrichers of the English Language and Human Consciousness.” *New York Times*, April 23, 2016.

Garber, Marjorie. *Shakespeare and Modern Culture*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2006.

www.Shakespeare-online.com/biography/why_study_Shakespeare.

www.nytimes.com/2009/04/26/week_in_review/26education.html

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST FOLIO

The First Folio, printed in 1623, contains around 900 pages comprising 38 of Shakespeare's plays, subtitled "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories and Tragedies." The frontispiece of the book displays a copper engraved image of Shakespeare by Martin Droeshout.

William Shakespeare's fellow actors, John Heminges and Henry Condell, were responsible for the collection. Heminges and Condell had to collect copies of Shakespeare's plays in the form of actors' sides, prompt books, quarto texts and handwritten versions.

The printers and publisher of the First Folio were William Jaggard and his son Isaac, along with Ed Blount. The Jaggards ran one of London's largest print shops. Printing the First Folio was a massive task because of its sheer size. Approximately 1000 copies of the First Folio were printed and sold for one pound each. Approximately 238 copies exist today, of which a third are in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.¹

The First Folio was dedicated to William, Earl of Pembroke and Philip, Earl of Montgomery, sons of Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who in the early 1590s had maintained a company of actors with whom Shakespeare may have been associated.

The Elizabethan era had no copyright laws, but printers could in fact protect the rights to the books they printed, by entering them in the Stationers' Register. The Register allowed publishers to

document their right to produce a particular printed work and constituted an early form of copyright law. The Company's charter gave it the right to seize illicit editions and bar the publication of unlicensed books.

Shakespeare never sought publication of any of his plays. They belonged to the Lord Chamberlain's Men and later, the King's Men, the acting companies for whom he wrote them. There was great competition between acting troupes; any company that managed to secure a copy of a new play, one that originated with another company but was not published, was sure to mount it, infringing what in our time would be considered copyright, and seriously impacting the profits of the originating company.

1. Greg, p. 17.

Greg, W.W. *The First Folio: Biographical and Textual History*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1956.

www.william-shakespeare-info/William-shakespeare-first-folio.htm

www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jul12/who-edited-shakespeare-john-florio

www.digplanet.com/wiki/William-Jaggard

www.rsc.org.uk/Shakespeare/language/first-folio

A PRINTER'S GLOSSARY

Quarto — a sheet of paper folded in half and then half again — thus creating four sections. The paper was written on all pages, giving 8 sections.

Bad quartos — pirated quarto editions, not published by the King's Men, which were usually filled with error.

Folio — made up of quires, which were six leaves of paper folded in half with text on both sides, thus giving 12 pages, which were sewn together. Each page is divided into two columns.

Foul pages — original handwritten drafts.

THE MECHANICS OF PRINTING THE FIRST FOLIO

The choice of the folio format was part of a solution to a practical problem. A single sheet of paper measuring 13 x 18 inches was printed on both sides with text from a play and folded in half to yield four printed pages. The pages needed to be large enough so that all 38 plays could be printed in a 900-page book that could still be bound into a single volume. Publishing a folio was an important event; the published work needed to be of serious intellectual or religious content. Could a book of plays have met those criteria?

Next: how many books should be printed? Too few copies would mean that the cost of a volume would be exorbitant; too many copies might mean the bookseller would have an inventory that he couldn't sell.

A more serious problem was the amount of paper to be used. Paper was extremely expensive and the First Folio was going to use a large amount of it. William Jaggard, the printer and publisher, would have to order about 170,000 sheets of medium quality paper for the job. Prior to printing, the paper was creased down the middle to make it easier to drape while drying.

Several workmen, called compositors, sorted each letter of metal type into its assigned place, called a "case", an array of wooden boxes set on a table slanted to be within easy reach of the compositor. With a composing stick in his left hand, the compositor placed each piece of type into a trench with the stick, placing each letter next to the previous one, forming words and then sentences.

Any leftover space at the end of a line was filled with blank spacers, a process known as "justifying". Then the whole assembly of type, called a "forme", was moved to the press.

A first run, or proof, was pulled to check for errors and make corrections. The proof was a single sheet held in a tray called a galley. By pulling the sheet through an open side of the galley, the printer or an employee could make corrections on the proof sheet while the printing continued. Each corrected sheet that came off the press was hung to dry. A worker or editor marked the proof sheet with a mark: a caret for an insertion, strike-outs for deletions, or marks to change a letter or a word. Next, compositors corrected the galleys, removing, rotating or adding type. The high price of paper meant the proof sheets containing mistakes were not discarded, but included in the finished book.

A particular page of a play existed in three forms; the uncorrected page, a single proof sheet that has been hand-corrected, and corrected pages with errors fixed by resetting the type. These three sheets were stacked and collated into "quires" — four to six sheets of paper folded over, gathered and sewn together,

Greg, W. W. *The Shakespeare Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History*. Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1985.

Mays, Andrea. *The Millionaire and the Bard. Henry Folger's Obsessive Hunt for Shakespeare's First Folio*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015.

LIFE IN SHAKESPEARE'S LONDON

"London, thou art the flower of Cities all."

—William Dunbar (1465-1530), London refrain.

Henry Stephenson in his book *Shakespeare's London* says that: "Londoners were an ignorant bunch. Those of the highest rank were well and laboriously educated according to the contemporary standard, but the rank and file were so busy making a living that they had no time for education."

At the same time there was a rapid change in the social scale. The middle class was emerging into prominence. It was no longer necessary to be born a peer in order to become a man of wealth and position; the ordinary man could aspire to affluence through merchandising or trade.

There existed as well a coarseness of speech in everyday talk that would be frowned upon today in polite society. It was reported Queen Elizabeth swore like a trooper, spat at her favorites and threw her slipper at the head of an obdurate councilor.

Between 1500 and 1800 London grew steadily in size. Its population increased from 50,000 in 1500 to 3,000,000 in 1700. This increase is surprising; unsanitary living conditions in London caused a high death rate. Only by a steady influx of immigrants from other parts of Britain and elsewhere did the population increase. The streets were always filthy, filled with mud, excrement and offal; the air was fetid, the water polluted and the omnipresent rats led to outbreaks of cholera and plague.

London was Britain's artistic and literary capital. For centuries, with its book publishers, newspapers, journals and weeklies, coffee houses, taverns and literary salons, the city played an important role in the life, development and work of every English literary figure of any significance.

Stephenson, Henry Thew. *Shakespeare's London*. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1906.)

www.victorianweb.org/history/hst4.html

www.shakespeare-online.com/biography/londonlife.html

THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE

Playgoing was a far different experience for the Elizabethans than it is for modern audiences. Elizabethans actually interacted with the players. Since the theatres had a thrust stage, actors and audience enjoyed an intimate relationship. Actors directly addressed the audience through soliloquies and asides, and often the audience answered back. The average Elizabethan yelled, hooted, snacked and chatted throughout the performance as he followed the action on the stage. During the Renaissance, writes Peggy O'Brien, playgoing was "a cross between the NCAA finals and a Madonna concert."¹ Because of Puritan beliefs that banned entertainment within the city limits, all London playhouses were outside the city proper. The patrons could choose among several theatres, and like Broadway today, the area possessed a seedy kind of glamour.

Brothels, pubs and taverns did a booming business next to the playhouses. Street vendors hawked their wares alongside the pimps and prostitutes. Pickpockets, thieves and con artists thrived in the area. The church profited, pocketing the revenues from prostitution and grift.

Performances at the playhouse were given every day except Sunday. Plays were performed from two to five o'clock in the afternoon, since there was no available artificial lighting. Theatre managers would raise a flag and sound a trumpet around two o'clock to alert theatre-goers that the curtain was going up.

As people entered the theatre, they would drop their admission into a box, originating the term "box

office". Ticket prices depended on the location of the seat; cheap seats for standees were in the pits and cost a penny. Spectators with more money could sit on benches with cushions. Vendors offered beer, water, oranges, nuts, gingerbread and apples, all of which were occasionally thrown at the actors.

There were no restrooms and no intermissions. Thus, the playhouse often reeked of ginger, garlic, beer, urine, tobacco and unwashed bodies.

The stage in Elizabethan times consisted of two levels — a main "thrust", or outer stage, a central, covered section called an inner stage, a balcony or upper stage, sometimes with entrance doors upstage, and a trapdoor in the stage, sometimes called the "hell". Actors could also be lowered onto the stage from above. Behind the stage were the actors' dressing rooms and below the stage was stored the machinery for producing stage effects. Scenery and props were minimal, but the costumes were extravagant, with spangles, lace, silk and velvet, often the castoffs of a wealthy patron.

There were no producers or directors in Elizabethan theatre; the actors themselves formed a collective business enterprise.

1. Epstein, p. 44.

Epstein, Norrie. *The Friendly Shakespeare*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.

COLLECTING THE FIRST FOLIO

First Folio copies have turned up in Africa, Australia, Europe, Asia and North America. The owners are a various lot — from a Microsoft billionaire to a bucolic Irish college. The first owner was 23-year-old Edward Derring, from Surrenden Derring in Kent, who came to London for a Michaelmas holiday in 1623. He made several purchases, including marmalade and boot hose, but his first recorded purchase is of the First Folio. He bought two bound copies for two pounds.¹

It is believed that around 1000 copies of the First Folio were printed, of which there are 234 known surviving copies. The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. holds the world's largest collection, with 82 copies; the British Museum holds five copies. While most copies are owned by university libraries or museums, a few are held by public libraries. In the United States, the New York Public Library has six copies, while the Boston Public Library, Free Library

of Philadelphia, the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois, The Huntington Library in Los Angeles County and the Dallas Public Library each own a copy. There is only one known copy in Canada, located in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. The First Folio is one of the most valuable books in the world; a copy sold at Christie's in New York in 2001 for over six million dollars.

To celebrate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, the Folger Shakespeare Library for the first time sent some of its 82 Folios on tour in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

1. Smith, p. 4.

Smith, Emma. *Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016.

www.En.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Folio

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CHARACTERS IN *THE BOOK OF WILL*

John Heminge (Heminges) (1566-1630) was an integral and prosperous member of the theatrical company that became the King's Men in 1603. Though not an exceptional actor, he appeared in numerous plays and is thought to be the first actor to perform the role of Falstaff. He served as the company's business manager for over 25 years.

Henry Condell (1567-1627) was an actor in the King's Men. He became an actor in 1590, and along with Heminges, became a churchwarden in St. Mary Aldermanbury. Of his nine children, only three survived. He acted in more of Ben Jonson's plays than Shakespeare's.

Ralph Crane (1615-1640?) was the scribe for the King's Men. He produced multiple manuscripts of the company's plays. The modern scholarly consensus holds that Crane's transcripts were the basis for many plays in the First Folio.

Edward Knight (1613-1637) was the bookkeeper and stage manager of the King's Men. It is thought that he added stage directions to Shakespeare's plays.

Ben Jonson (1527-1637) was the son of a clergyman and the stepson of a bricklayer. He worked as a bricklayer in the Netherlands and then crossed the Channel for London where he became a playwright. Jonson was known as the most learned poet of the age, for no subject was too hard, dry or remote from common life for him to attempt to master it. Jonson was extremely combative and quarrelsome; it was almost a necessity for him to quarrel with someone. In 1616, the year Shakespeare died, Jonson became poet laureate of England. When he died in 1637, he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Richard Burbage (1567-1619). The greatest actor of his day, Burbage was Shakespeare's first Hamlet. He was a shareholder in the King's Men, which made him wealthy. As he became more prominent, he played such roles as Henry V, Othello, Lear, Macbeth and Coriolanus.

Anne Hathaway Shakespeare (1556-1623). Little is known about Anne but there is much conjecture about her. She married Will in 1582 and bore him three children, Susanna and the twins, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet died at an early age, to Will's regret. Stephen Greenblatt in *Will in the World* speculates that Anne was bad-tempered; Germaine Greer in *Shakespeare's Wife* believes she was a heroine wronged by history.

Amelia Bassano Lanier (1569-1645) was the first woman in England to publish a book of poetry. Born into a family of secret Jews (known as Marranos or Conversos), she came to London from Venice. At age 13, she became the teenage mistress of the elderly Henry Carey, the Lord Chamberlain, patron of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and later, the King's Men. She gave birth to an illegitimate son; therefore, Lord Hunsdon had her removed from Court. But Amelia's family had become established in the world of the King's Men as composers, orchestra directors, performers and set designers. Amelia determined to learn as much as she could about the theatre and to meet William Shakespeare. It is believed she became his mistress and is the "dark lady" of the sonnets.

www.shakespeare-online.com/biography/htm.

www.britannica.com/biography/

STUDY QUESTIONS

Pre-Performance Questions

1. What makes a literary work a “classic?” What is the criteria and who makes the decision?
2. What do you already know about William Shakespeare and his First Folio? Which parts of his life and what he is credited with writing are mythical, which are factual and which could be either?

Post-Performance Questions

1. How do the technical aspects add to the telling of the story? How does the set design set the tone for the play?
2. Why do the group of actors, the King’s Men, feel compelled to compile the First Folio? What obstacles are they ready to face and what unforeseen obstacles reveal themselves?
3. Why does Richard Burbage get upset at the tavern and what is his response?
4. How would you describe the relationship between John Heminges and his wife, Rebecca?
5. How is the character of William Jaggard perceived by the King’s Men? Why do they engage with him and his son? What becomes of this relationship?
6. How would you describe the character Isaac Jaggard? What is his motivation for the publication of the Folio?
7. Who is the hero/heroine of this play? Why do you feel that way?
8. Why does everyone have a different opinion about *Pericles*?
9. How would you describe Ben Jonson’s relationship with the King’s Men? What is his contribution to the collection of plays?

ACTIVITIES

Compiling a Collection

1. Pick a theme for the compilation. This can be a season, a shared event, a general idea or a theme represented from your curriculum. Define a specific theme – the more specific the easier it will be to collect items reflective of that theme.
2. Divide the class into small working groups with the instruction that each group needs to identify what can be used as source material for representing the theme. Examples could include: articles (newspapers, blogs, postings, etc.), photographs, songs, poems, quotes, and/or other media.
3. The groups should also define the criteria for inclusion. For example, to be included an item must: a.) be reproducible in print; b.) reflect a mood in response to the specified theme; c.) have an author or resource that can be authenticated and cited. Three to four criterion are ideal. Criteria should be agreed to by all members of the group. Consider holding each member of the group accountable for developing one criterion.
4. Groups compile their materials. Consider having the group review their process noting specifically when they all agreed to something and when it was more challenging to find agreement.
5. The compilation is presented to the rest of the class.
6. Discussion questions following presentation:
 1. What do you notice about the collection – similarities and differences between items?
 2. How would you define what criteria was used to assess an item for inclusion?
 3. How is the collection successful in representing the specified theme?
 4. What would you add and why? What would you omit and why?

Research and Reasoning PG: Gather information from a variety of sources; analyze and evaluate the quality and relevance of the source; and use it to answer complex questions.

Visual Art PG: Explain, demonstrate, and interpret a range of purposes of art and design, recognizing that the making and study of art and design can be approached from a variety of viewpoints, intelligences, and perspectives

Paraphrasing Shakespeare

1. Start by picking a monologue (or a scene) from one of Shakespeare's plays. After reading the excerpt, identify the key themes and lines/words that define the character that you can paraphrase in your own words.
2. Once the paraphrasing is complete, identify areas that you can embellish. Look for moments where you can expound upon what the character is feeling or thinking. Add this to the paraphrase.
3. The final step is to edit the paraphrase down. What happens if the edit needs to reflect a 10% cut to your text; 50%; 80%?
4. Discuss how it was to translate Shakespeare's poetic language into modern English. What were some of the obstacles that you faced? What is lost or gained from paraphrasing, embellishing and editing what was original to Shakespeare?

Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.

Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.

Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

ACTIVITIES

Shakespearean Operator

1. Circle the group and have everyone sit close together.
2. Starting with the player on your right, whisper a short quote from Shakespeare. For example: "It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord." A quotation that is rich in imagery and reflective of a strong combination of consonants and vowels will work best.
3. The first player whispers what s/he heard to the player to his/her right. The game proceeds around the circle to the final player.
4. The final player shares what s/he heard.
5. If the quote is correctly repeated, discuss why articulating the quote was easy to do.
6. If the quote is incorrectly repeated, working backward, player by player, retrace how the quote was transformed from its original to what the final player shared.
7. Following the activity, inquire as to each player's experience 'translating' the original source material. Did they purposefully make adjustments to the text and if so, why/why not? How is this activity reflective of the process shared by the characters in *The Book of Will*? How is it different?

Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

PERSPECTIVES

Make your experience unforgettable when you join us for one of these insightful, educational events:

Creative Team Perspectives

Jan 13 | 6:00pm | The Conservatory Theatre

Get an exclusive insider's perspective before the show when you join us for a free, professionally-moderated discussion with the creative team.

Perspectives: Higher Education Advisory Council

Jan 22 | 1:30pm

Participate in a topical discussion led by members of our academic community after the matinee.

Perspectives: Theatre & Theology

Jan 24 | 6:30pm

Join Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod after the performance to examine each show through a theological lens.

Cast Perspectives

Jan 29 | 1:30pm

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors after the matinee.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Denver Public Library recommends:

Read!

The Millionaire and the Bard by Andrea Mays (2015). This is the tale of Henry Clay Folger, a wealthy and obsessed collector, and the shrine he built dedicated to William Shakespeare. Folger and his wife Emily spent much of their life and no small part of their fortune in the pursuit of playbills, pamphlets and other Shakespeare ephemera. But the true object of obsession for Folger was one book in particular, “*Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies, Published according to the True Originall Copies,*” printed in London in 1623, and better known as the First Folio. In their time Folger and his wife managed to collect 82 copies of the Folio, but it wasn’t easy. This feat called for the hatching of secret deals, engaging proxy buyers, outmaneuvering the competition, a small measure of luck and having lots and lots of cash on hand. Obsession meets intrigue plus folly and a library is born...

Watch!

Anonymous (2012, Columbia Pictures). The identity of the author behind the works of William Shakespeare has long been a fraught topic with many contenders put forth. In *Anonymous*, the theory put forth is an Oxfordian one—that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, or perhaps even the Queen herself, wrote the works of the Bard. This controversial treatment of Shakespeare’s authorial mystery will certainly have you asking questions!

Listen!

Take all my Loves: 9 Shakespeare Sonnets by Rufus Wainwright (2016). Perhaps the composer says it best himself: “I’ve found in working with the sonnets they even transcend the plays, though to even fathom that is inconceivable...So much of the language and so much of the sentiment is contemporary—gender and sexuality and love and hate are just so plainly exhibited that it’s really searing.” Here, celebrated musician Wainwright does more than take on the sonnets, he elevates them with music and collaboration with other talented voices such as Florence Welch, Helena Bonham Carter and Anna Prohaska. Released 400 years after Shakespeare’s death, this album proves the Bard’s works are transcendent of time and contemporary always!

Download!

Use Denver Public Library’s Gale Virtual Reference Library to track down excellent critical essays about the Bard and his times. A fascinating article you should start with is *Shakespeare’s plays were written by someone other than William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon.* by Schulenburg and Mifflin. Discussing the Pros and Cons of the debate behind the authorship of Shakespeare’s many works, you will delight in that—regardless of who penned the prose—at least Heminges and Condell hustled so hard to get the First Folio published.



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